



Transit Feasibility Study

May 2017

by

St. Croix County Transit Subcommittee

with assistance from

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission



St. Croix County Transit Subcommittee

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



Wisconsin Department of
Transportation

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Introduction

Purpose

In 2015, a Transit Study Subcommittee of St. Croix County's standing Transportation Committee was formed. The Subcommittee received a Federal Transit Administration planning grant, through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and contracted with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to conduct a study considering the feasibility of transit services within St. Croix County and between the County and frequented destinations in neighboring communities.

This study examines existing travel patterns and services in and around St. Croix County, considers alternatives for types of service appropriate to identified transit needs, and makes recommendations for funding and implementation of those services deemed most suitable. By engaging in this planning process, St. Croix County is laying the foundation for garnering funds and implementing a reasonable, efficient, and effective transit service, a service that will begin serving today's needs and adjust to changing needs in the future.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is integral to the development of this study. With the dual goal of gathering input from, and disseminating information to, the public we can better gauge the interest and needs. But, also, this type of interaction can assist in eventual implementation of the plan's recommendations by garnering public and political support.

The planning process employed online and hardcopy surveys early in the process to help determine transit needs throughout the County. The survey instrument and raw results can be seen in Appendix A, with results and analyses documented in the "Analysis" chapter of this document.

Two public information/input opportunities, in open house format, were held. The first was held early in the process to engage municipal and county officials, and offer open house format opportunity for public input. The meeting was held at the Agriculture Services and Education Center, in Baldwin, on Wednesday, October 5, 2016. There were approximately 20 attendees, most expressing a need for transit options in the County, some with specific suggestions for service needs and desired destinations. A second public information meeting, in a similar format, was held on March 8, 2017, at the County Government Center in Hudson. At this meeting, service alternatives were presented and comments were taken concerning attendees' likes and dislikes of the various alternatives. There were approximately 60 attendees. Comments expressed included those of support for fixed route and shared ride taxi options, concern for the potential cost to the tax payer, and encouragement to partner with the private sector for services. Summarized comments appear in Appendix E.

A Transit Planning Subcommittee of the St. Croix County Transportation Committee was formed to oversee the entire process and to act as the technical advisory committee for the study. This group was instrumental in spreading the word about surveys and other engagement opportunities, as well as providing a great deal of practical knowledge about the County, its communities, and existing transit services. The planning process is also documented on the County's website, along with opportunity to participate through the submission of comments.

Existing Conditions and Data Review

Background

St. Croix County is located in west central Wisconsin. The St. Croix River, a portion of a National Scenic Riverway, forms the County's western boundary, as well as the state boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota. The two states are linked by two bridges within St. Croix County – one carrying approximately 100,000 vehicles per day on Interstate 94 which traverses the County and provides a direct link to the Twin Cities. The other bridge, farther to the north, is a two lane lift-bridge built in 1931, carrying in excess of 15,000 vehicles per day, and connecting St. Croix County communities, such as Somerset and New Richmond, to Stillwater, Minnesota. A replacement for the existing bridge at this location is in the process of being constructed. The new bridge, expected to be completed in August of 2017, is a much larger 4-lane bridge, better suited to higher volumes and allowing uninterrupted flow of both highway and river traffic. The old lift-bridge will remain open to bicycles and pedestrians and will be incorporated into a five-mile, looped trail system that will connect the St. Croix Crossing and the lift bridge. The lift bridge will continue to operate, allowing boats to cross beneath.

Largely due to pressures from the growing Twin Cities area, much of the western half of St. Croix County, especially in areas with easy access to a river crossing, continues to experience a high rate of primarily residential development. Much of this residential development is occurring in a fairly low density residential subdivision fashion that really took off in the 1970s. Much of the demand for housing came from those looking to combine a job in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, with lower cost housing in a more 'rural' setting. In response, small cities and villages scattered across the County worked through some growing pains, adapted, and now thrive with services to meet the population's needs and desires. Growth in business and industry has provided good jobs and a robust economy within St. Croix County.

The growth in population and economic development has had another consequence – increased travel. The cities and villages are still relatively small, requiring most residents, even if they do live in one of the County's fourteen incorporated communities, to travel to a different community for work, school, medical appointments, shopping, etc. Approximately half of the workforce living in St. Croix County commutes to jobs in Minnesota, while many work in St. Croix County and other western Wisconsin counties, but outside of their community of residence. Those living outside of incorporated communities, whether in residential subdivisions or on the family farm, rely on their cars for even more of their common trips.

Also generating a significant number of trips within St. Croix County are the higher education facilities that have also grown and prospered in here. While the long-standing institution of the University of Wisconsin - River Falls is actually just across the county line, in Pierce County, the campus has a critical role in St. Croix County's economy and travel patterns. (The City of River Falls lies in both, St. Croix and Pierce counties.) Approximately half of the students enrolled at UW-River Falls are from Minnesota, many from the Twin Cities area, some commuting to campus, and some residing in dorms or other student housing near campus and traveling through St. Croix County for weekends at home. Also with a River Falls campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) draws students from a regional area, including St. Croix County, as does the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) campus in New Richmond. The technical colleges, without the residence halls of a university campus, generate auto trips from nearly all their enrollees. The higher

education institutions are specifically noted here for several reasons: (1) the majority of students attending these institutions are young adults who do not yet have a livable income, making the ownership and maintenance of a reliable vehicle a substantial burden, if not impossible; (2) the campuses are generators of a large concentration of auto trips, coming and going throughout the day, a fact that is substantiated by the parking challenges typically faced on such campuses; and (3) the current age group in college, frequently referred to as 'Millennials', have shown an interest, nationwide, in alternative modes of transportation for reasons of environmental conservation and shifting financial and time usage priorities, among others. Many communities are implementing improvements to alternative mode facilities and systems, such as bicycle lanes and trails, as well as transit options from passenger rail to shared ride taxi services, in order to attract and retain young professionals, and the companies that employ them.

Service and Equipment Inventory

There are a number of transportation services currently operating in St. Croix County. A few of the services receive public funding for the transportation of the elderly, persons with disabilities, and/or school children. Other services are privately operated, transporting either clients of the owner/operator, or the general public. Each either has their own vehicles, contracts for the services of another entity with its own vehicles, or utilizes the personal vehicles of volunteer drivers and staff. Exhibits 1a and 1b list the providers that responded to a recent survey with information regarding the service they provide, the people served, the vehicles they operate, and the source of funding to provide their particular transportation service.

The providers and the services they provide varied forms of operation and mission. In the first category are the shared-ride taxi systems in New Richmond and the City of River Falls, which utilize federal, state and local investment, along with rider fares, to offer trips to the general public from origins to destinations of the riders' choice within their defined service areas, with no prioritization of trip purpose.

The second category includes services which are also publicly financed, but have a narrower focus of rider eligibility and/or trip purpose. The St. Croix County ADRC directly provides trips to nutrition sites and other specific events to meet the needs of those participating elderly and disabled populations utilizing funding under *Wisconsin §85.21, the County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance program*. Also under this funding source, the ADRC provides medical trips to the County's elderly and ambulatory persons with disabilities to destination within the County and the Twin Cities area, through a volunteer driver program, and contracts with a private carrier to provide a very limited number of trips to persons with disabilities within the City of Hudson. The Center for Independent Living of Western Wisconsin (CILWW) operates a volunteer driver program and a voucher program for persons with disabilities and the frail elderly who face barriers in accessing other programs. These CILWW programs cover residents of 18 counties in western and northwestern Wisconsin utilizing a blend of funding from Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 program, Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, administered by WisDOT, and several other local contributing agencies. Also in this category, Handi-Lift represents private providers who can access contracts with a statewide broker to provide medical trips reimbursed by Medicare.

Exhibit 1a:

Existing services: Services and Riders

Provider	Description	service area	service days							service hours	service type		trip purpose	rider eligibility	
			S	M	T	W	T	F	S		type ¹	level ²			Resrvtn
Public Transit															
City of River Falls	Shared Ride Taxi	City + 5 mi	x	x	x	x	x	x	6a-9p	DR	c-c	24hr	any	all	
C. New Richmond (Running Inc.)	Shared Ride Taxi	New Richmond		x	x	x	x	x	5a-3p	DR	c-c	same day	any	all	
Specialized Transit															
St. Croix Co. ADRC	Nutrition site and other trips	nutrition site areas ³		x	x	x	x		9a-1p, 9a-3p	DR	d-d	24hr	m,sr,sh,e	E or D	
A Taxi	contract w/ ADRC	Hudson, Stillwater		x	x	x	x	x	5a-3a	DR	d-d	same day	any	Disability	
St. Croix Co. ADRC	Vol. Med. Transp.	wc WI and Twin Cities		x	x	x	x		9a-5p	DR	d-d	2+ days	m	Co. res.	
CILWW - New Freedom	New Freedom	18 cos. NW WI-vol. dr.	x	x	x	x	x	x	24 hrs	DR	c-c	2 days	any	all	
Handi-Lift Transportation	priv. carrier	B, D, P, SC, EC, Ch cos.	x	x	x	x	x		5a-5p	DR	D-D	same day	m,e	Disability	
School Transportation															
Baldwin-Woodville School District	school bus	B-W school district		x	x	x	x		6a-5p	FR	c-c		sch, sr	student	
New Richmond School District	school bus - contracted	New Richmond S.D.		x	x	x	x		5:30a-5:30p	FR	c-c	well adv.	sr,r,cc,sh,e	student	
River Falls School District	school bus	River Falls S.D.		x	x	x	x		5a-5p	FR	c-c		sch	student	
Hudson School District	school bus - contracted	Hudson school distr.		x	x	x	x		6a-5p	FR	c-c	2+ days	sr,cc, spec.	student	
Somerset School District	school bus - contracted	Somerset S.D.		x	x	x	x		6a-5p	FR	c-c		sr,school	student	
St. Croix Central School District	school bus	SCC S.D.	x	x	x	x	x	x	6a-5p	FR	c-c		sch,v,sr,cc	student	
Client Services/ gov't funded															
Veterans Services-S.C. Co.	vol. driver prog.	St. Croix Co.		x	x	x	x		varies	DR	d-d	2+ days	m	veterans	
Bridge for Community Life	worksite transportation	25 mi radius (Somerset)		x	x	x	x		7a-5p	FR	D-D		sr,cc	clients	
ProAct, Inc.	worksite transportation	St. Croix & Pierce cos.		x	x	x	x		7a-3:30p	FR	D-D		sr,e	clients	
ESR, Inc.	worksite transportation	St. Croix Co.		x	x	x	x		9a-4p	FR	d-d		e,sr,sh	clients	
Baldwin Care Center, Inc.	resident needs	E.C. to Twin Cities		x	x	x	x		7a-4p	DR	D-D		m,sr,r,sh	residents	
Park View Home-Woodville	resident needs	varies	x	x	x	x	x	x	as needed	DR	d-d		m	residents	
St. Croix Health Center	resident needs	varies							as needed	DR	d-d		m,v,sr,sh	residents	
River Falls Housing Authority	for tenants, as needed	River Falls		x	x	x			9a-11a	FR	c-c		e,sr,sh	residents	
Privately funded services															
Baldwin Area Medical Center	client service (home-clinic)	15 mi. radius (some more)		x	x	x	x		8a-4p	DR	c-c		m	clients	
Christian Community Homes	resident needs	Hudson area		x				x	6a-3p,8a-n	DR	d-d	well adv.	m,sr	residents	
The Deerfield	Activity trans. for residents	varies	x	x	x	x	x	x	varies	DR	d-d		v,sr,sh	residents	
Woodland Hill	resident needs	Hudson area/as needed							as needed	FR	d-d	same day	m,sr,r,sh	residents	
Magna SMV Transp. & Taxi	priv. carrier/taxi service	Hudson area	x	x	x	x	x	x	24 hrs	DR	d-d	same day	all	all	

¹Service type is either Demand Response (DR) or Fixed Route (FR)

²Levels of service reported include: curb to curb (c-c), door to door (d-d), or door through door (D-D)

³Nutrition site locations: Baldwin, Deer Park, Glenwood City, Hammond, Hudson, New Richmond, Roberts, Somerset, Woodville (M,W,F - 9a-1p; T,Th - 9a-3p)

⁴Trip types include: medical/healthcare (m), employment (e), social/recreational (sr), shopping (sh), volunteer activities (v), school (sch), childcare (cc), and religious events (r)

Exhibit 1b:

Existing services: Vehicles and Funding

Provider	Service Description	number of cars		number of vans		number of buses		number of other veh.		total vehicles		funding			
		total	access	total	access	total	access	total	access	total	access	pub. ²	priv.	rider	other
Public Transit															
City of River Falls	Shared Ride Taxi			3	3					3	3	s,f		flat	
C. New Richmond (Running Inc.)	Shared Ride Taxi			3	3					3	3	s,f		flat	
Specialized Transit															
St. Croix Co. ADRC	Nutrition site and other trips			5	0	4	3			9	3	s		flat	
A Taxi	contract w/ ADRC	10	0	5	0					15	0	s		x	
St. Croix Co. ADRC	Vol. Med. Transp.	16 ¹	0							16	0	s,f		donation	
CILWW - New Freedom	New Freedom	80 ¹	0							80	0	s,f		flat	x
Handi-Lift Transportation	priv. carrier			40	35					40	35	s	x		
School Transportation															
Baldwin-Woodville School District	school bus					26	1			26	1	s			
New Richmond School District	school bus - contracted			2	0	30	2			32	2	s	x	x	
River Falls School District	school bus					30	0			30	0	x			
Hudson School District	school bus - contracted					54	0			54	0	x	x		
Somerset School District	school bus - contracted					18	0			18	0	s			
St. Croix Central School District	school bus	2	0	5	1	18	1			25	2	s			
Client Services/ gov't funded															
Veterans Services-S.C. Co.	vol. driver prog.	7 ¹	0							7	0	s			county levy
Bridge for Community Life	worksite transportation			8	1	3	3			11	4	s	x		\$20/day
ProAct, Inc.	worksite transportation			7	7	4	1	3	1	14	9	s,f		flat	
ESR, Inc.	worksite transportation			6	6	5	5			11	11	s,f		X	
Baldwin Care Center, Inc.	resident needs			2	2	1	1			3	3	s,f	x		x
Park View Home-Woodville	resident needs			1	1					1	1	s		x	
St. Croix Health Center	resident needs	2	0	1	1					3	1	s,f	x		
River Falls Housing Authority	for tenants, as needed			1	1					1	1	f			
Privately funded services															
Baldwin Area Medical Center	client service (home-clinic)	1	1							1	1				donation
Christian Community Homes	resident needs			2	2	1	1			3	3				
The Deerfield	activity trans. for residents	0	0	2	1	1	1			3	2		x		
Woodland Hill	resident needs			1	1	1				1	1				pt. of res. fee
Magna SMV Transp. & Taxi	priv. carrier/taxi service			10	0					10	0		x		

¹ Vehicles are privately owned by the volunteer drivers.

² Public funding is designated as state (s), or federal (f), both (s,f), or specifics not designated (x)

The third category in Exhibits 1a and 1b includes school district transportation. The typical school bus operation provides transportation to students to and from school, when students live two miles or more from the school, or when a route to school crosses a hazardous barrier, such as a major highway, a busy railroad, or other barrier to a safe trip to school, as well as to and from some extra-curricular events. Each of the school districts in St. Croix County either owns buses and provides trips these trips directly, or contracts with a private bus company, as spelled out in §121.54 *Transportation by school districts*. Teachers and other school employees may also ride the bus under the same conditions as students. Under §120.13(27) *Transportation of persons who are not students*, “... the school board may use or allow the use of school buses owned and operated by the school district to transport persons who are not pupils of the school district. School buses may be used by persons who are not pupils of the school district during school hours if such use does not interfere with the transportation of pupils of the school district.” and provided certain not unreasonable registration and insurance conditions are met.

The next category of transportation services listed in Exhibits 1a and 1b includes services that are provided for a specific agency’s or company’s narrowly defined clients, for limited trip purposes, with some public funds utilized to do so. The public funds are not necessarily intended strictly for transportation purposes, but are largely used to access services or programs either provided by the agency, or required by a client who is paying for the services of the entity. In short, riders must be eligible members of a specific program, such as veteran’s medical benefits or those enrolled in worksite programs, or residents of the sponsoring entity, such as care facilities, elderly or low income housing.

The last group includes those entities that identified themselves as using only private funds to provide transportation to their clients or customers. This includes medical centers that offer trips to and from surgical or therapy appointments, care facilities that provide transportation to meet their residents needs as a part of the private fees paid to the facility, and private transportation providers that are not operating under a publicly funded contract.

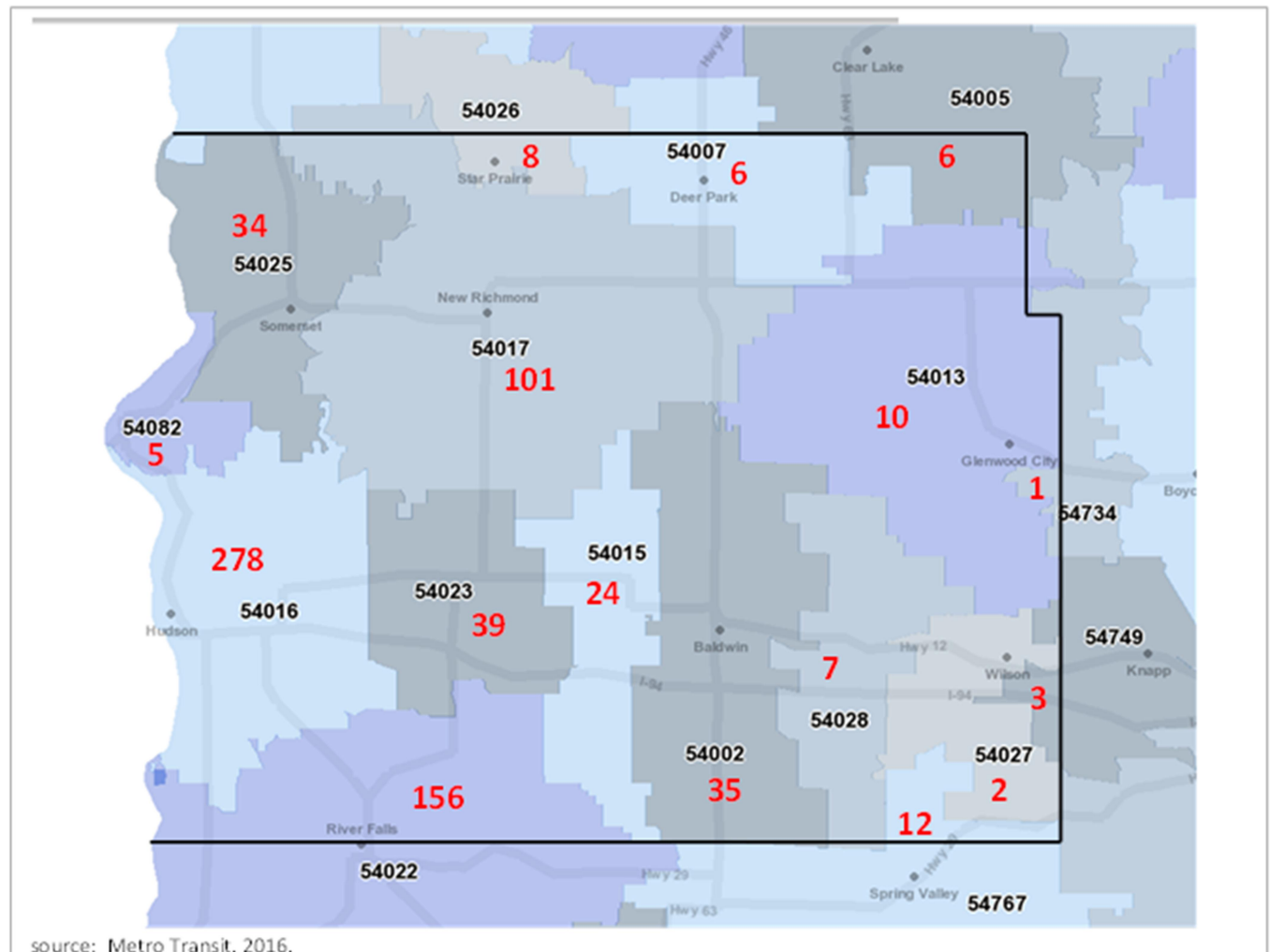
These two exhibits give us a picture of the services that are available at this time in St. Croix County. Representatives of a number of the services listed have participated in transportation coordination efforts conducted in the County and as a part of the greater west central Wisconsin region. The most recent recommendations of those efforts are discussed in the following ‘Existing Plans’ section.

Other Transit-related Services

There are also rideshare matching services available to commuters living in St. Croix County. Metro Transit, the transit agency for the Twin Cities area, offers a rideshare matching tool for anyone who lives or works in the seven Minnesota counties that make up Metro’s service area. Commuters who wish to join a carpool can enter information about their trip origin (home) and destination (usually work), desired travel times, and some other trip preference data and will be matched to other commuters that fit their trip criteria. (See Exhibit 2 for the number of participants in the Metro rideshare from the various zip codes in St. Croix County.) Participants from these zip codes total 730. According to Metro Transit’s data services, most of these participants have a destination in downtown Minneapolis and the top five employers participating in these trips are Anderson Corporation, U.S. Federal Government, US Bank, Thomson Reuters, and Target Inc. One of the major benefits of the Metro rideshare program is the ‘guaranteed ride home’ feature which offers

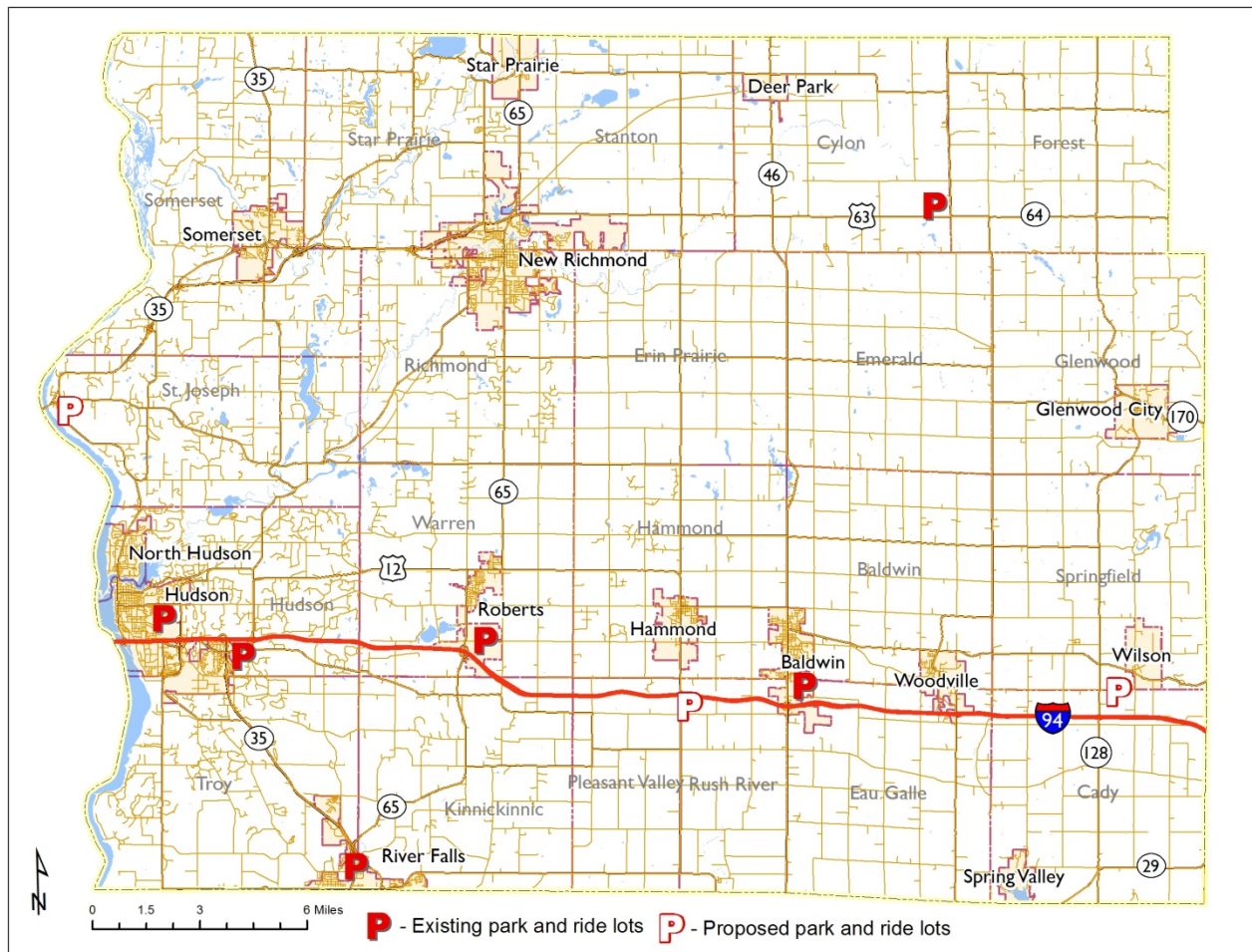
regular users of Metro Transit's rideshare or other transit programs a ride home if there would be an emergency at home, or unforeseen need to work late, addressing the most common reason given for not carpooling. Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) offers a similar rideshare matching program, but does not include a guaranteed ride home in this portion of the state. There are also other online rideshare applications available to anyone, but most likely would not include this important element.

Exhibit 2: Number of Metro Rideshare Participants by Zip Code



Of great importance to commuter transit and rideshare programs alike, are park and ride lots. Parking lots designated for carpoolers to meet for their trip, or for transit systems to conveniently pick up riders, are commonly provided by DOTs or larger transit systems. Of course, in the absence of a wisely located 'official' park and ride lot with adequate capacity, commuters arriving to a meeting spot, whether by car or bicycle, will find or create one of many 'unofficial' park and ride lots, often in corners of larger retail parking lots, or a piece of public right of way for as long as it is safe and allowed to occur. There are six 'official' existing park and ride lots in St. Croix County and three more that are currently proposed by WisDOT, as shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3: WisDOT Park and Ride Locations



Existing Plans

Transit Coordination Plans

In 2013, an invitation went out to transportation and pertinent agency representatives in St. Croix County to attend a meeting to be held on August 8th with the purpose of reviewing and updating the *St. Croix County Locally Developed Transportation Coordination Plan* which was developed by a similar group in 2008. The 2013 plan, completed and submitted to WisDOT in November of 2013 identified a number of needs faced in an effort to provide and improve transportation services over the next five years. Those needs are listed below:

Identified Needs:

- More efficiency among programs
- Better use of existing inventory of vehicles
- Better appreciation of value of services and coordination among decision-makers and general public
- Improved transportation service coordination region-wide to provide for all travel needs
- Private sector involvement in improving transportation service coordination
- Clearinghouse of resources and programs that fund transportation
- Ongoing evaluation of target populations transportation needs
- Better information of available services to target populations to encourage use
- Regular distribution of Medicaid statistics
- Maintain and expand existing services to meet demand
- Stability of funding
- Increased funding to meet increasing demands

The group then developed goals and actions to help in meeting the identified needs. The most goals and actions most pertinent to this study include those to develop, expand, and continue services, with actions pertaining to analysis and better coordination of existing services, and the development services to fill the gaps in service; as well as a goal to increase transportation options for the transportation disadvantaged, by increasing flexibility of client-specific programs and extending services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities after hours and on weekends. This plan, as well as the regional coordination plan, looks to better coordinate services across political boundaries. (The full listing of goals and actions from the *St. Croix County Locally Developed Transportation Coordination Plan*, are included in this report as Appendix B.

Comprehensive Plans

St. Croix County

The St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in November of 2012, makes numerous references to a multi-modal transportation system. This includes some results from a survey, sent to county residents, indicating that while 86% of county residents are satisfied with the current road network, 66% feel increasing traffic volumes are a problem, and over 55% of survey respondents would like expanded public transit options. Among the plan's goals and objectives are the following of particular relevance to this plan:

Goal 1: Provide a St. Croix County transportation system that is safe, convenient, efficient, accessible, and sustainable while meeting the multi-modal needs of residents and the traveling public and enhancing their quality of life.

- 1.1 Support multiple modes of transportation, appropriately address user conflicts, protect our resources, and improve the quality of life of residents through the planning and development of transportation projects, facilities, and policies.
- 1.2 Provide affordable and accessible transportation and transit services in an economically sustainable manner for all residents.
- 1.9 Recognize greater energy savings and fuel efficiency as a crucial component of the transportation network.

Goal 2: Provide neighborhoods and communities in our county that are efficiently connected with each other and the region, moving people and freight through a variety of transportation modal options.

- 2.1 Integrate alternative transportation modes, as appropriate, including pedestrian, biking, ride-share, transit, freight rail, passenger rail, and airports etc., as an important part of services.
- 2.3 Encourage intergovernmental cooperation, at all appropriate levels, and planning as crucial to ensuring a connected, consistent, safe, accessible, and effective transportation network.
- 2.4 Coordinate and cooperate in the provision of transportation services with municipalities within and surrounding the County and with neighboring counties, the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota.
- 2.5 Develop transportation modal options for commuters and other riders in our county to efficiently and sustainably connect neighborhoods, development areas, and communities within the county and region, as well as better connecting our county to the Twin Cities, the West Central Region and the Midwest.

Goal 3: St. Croix County will work to maintain, sustain, and enhance our multi-modal transportation infrastructure and services in an economical manner.

- 3.1 Maintain, preserve and enhance the county's existing transportation infrastructure and services, including highways, railways, bike, pedestrian, transit, air and water systems.
- 3.2 Continue to develop and maintain a functional and jurisdictional classification system to ensure overall highway system performance.
- 3.4 Explore alternative funding sources for the maintenance and enhancement of our transportation network.

(St. Croix County 2012-2035 Comprehensive Plan, Volume 2-4 – Transportation, 2012, pp. 4.3-4.4)

Policy recommendations included in the County's comprehensive plan, which are of particular relevance to this plan, include the following:

Policies:

Rail

- 4.2 Work with the Western Wisconsin Passenger Rail Coalition and the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative to promote the development of high-speed passenger rail service to western Wisconsin.

Transit/Commuting

- 5.1 The county will stay informed and work with regional efforts to provide transit options to workers commuting from St. Croix County to the greater metropolitan centers.
- 5.2 The county will continue to support and actively promote the construction of the new St. Croix River Crossing at Houlton.
- 5.3 The county, working through the Aging and Disability Resource Center, will continue to support and provide transportation services for elderly and disabled residents and explore opportunities to expand these services.
- 5.4 Continue to support and encourage park and ride lot and carpooling program development in appropriate locations.
- 5.5 Explore transit options to include telecommuting and the expansion of current levels of service and to reduce the current levels of commuting.

(St. Croix County 2012-2035 Comprehensive Plan, Volume 2-4 – Transportation, 2012, pp. 4.6)

Local Comprehensive Plans

Three of the four cities in St. Croix County recognized and, at least, suggested a future need for transit services.

The City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2009, includes the following statement regarding future passenger rail and transit options:

“As a hub city in the fastest growing county in Wisconsin, the city of Hudson, in partnership with St. Croix County and WisDOT, should pursue opportunities to develop transit service for the area in the form of bus and rail. Transit should focus on serving the highest demand markets such as the Minnesota commuter and possibly city to city trips within the county/region. Transit use generally improves the overall capacity utilization of the transportation infrastructure. Additional benefits of developing transit in the area would be to provide mode choice to citizens, decrease emissions of greenhouse gases and promote a more sustainable community.”

(City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan Update 2009, p. 99)

The City of New Richmond included transit and park and ride lots in their goals, objectives, and policy recommendations in their comprehensive plan, adopted in 2005. (The City intends to enter into an update process of their plan in late 2016.)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: To develop public transportation into a viable alternative mode of transportation.

Policies

- The City of New Richmond recognizes that public transportation is a basic public service.
- Public transportation should be provided using delivery systems appropriate to the level of the city's development and density. Delivery systems to be considered include both fixed-route and demand responsive services employing various sized buses, vans, and taxis.
- The City of New Richmond promotes land use patterns and site design standards that can be efficiently served by public transportation.
- Public transportation systems in the City of New Richmond will be related in design to travel patterns within the city.
- At a minimum the City of New Richmond will consider public transportation options to meet the needs of the transit dependent.
- All public transportation services employed by the City of New Richmond will provide a level of service that is safe, convenient, comfortable and affordable.
- Funding and organizational mechanisms for public transportation should be based on principals of equity and reflect the interconnectivity of jurisdictions within the City of New Richmond region.
- Transportation service will be coordinated to increase efficiency and avoid overlap and duplication of service. Coordination will encompass public and private transportation services and include such travel demand management programs as ride-sharing, employee van pools, park and ride lots, etc.

Action Items

5. Ride Share Parking Lots – As was noted in this plan element, many New Richmond residents commute great distances alone in order to get to and from work. To alleviate some of the traffic volume on area roadways and to encourage ride sharing to promote a healthier environment the City of New Richmond should establish several of these facilities within the community where feasible.
6. Encourage and support the future development of passenger rail service between New Richmond and the Twin Cities.

(City of New Richmond Comprehensive Planning Program, 2005, pp. 4-44 and 4-54.)

The City of River Falls' comprehensive plan includes extensive discussion of existing, past, and potential transit options, while recommendations are more general in nature, as seen here:

6.3 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Encouraging convenient and acceptable public transit options will reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicle commuting trips and result in a decrease in average trip length and overall vehicle miles traveled.

6.6 GUIDING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

6-G-1 *Implement a comprehensive strategy to provide for the necessary and efficient use of automobiles, while encouraging the use and accommodating the needs of alternative modes of transportation.*

(Comprehensive Plan for the City of River Falls, 2005, pp. 6-13 & 6-22)

The villages in the western parts of St. Croix County, such as North Hudson, and Somerset, address a need for a transit link to the Twin Cities, mainly to accommodate commuters, but do not generally recognize much need within the county beyond the existing services for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Ridesharing and park and ride lots are also commonly discussed as alternative mode options in the village comprehensive plans.

Most of the towns express some support for the existing services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, but most do not make much mention of new transit options in their comprehensive plans, with the exception of a cursory mention in some of the western towns with more urban character and closer commuter ties to the Twin Cities, including the towns of St. Joseph and Somerset.

Other Plans

Beginning in 2009, Washington County, Minnesota garnered funding for an alternatives analysis study in the general Interstate 94 corridor from the Twin Cities to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The corridor became known as the Gateway Corridor and the study examined a wide variety of transit modes, most notably express bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), and commuter rail. While ridership potential was fairly high along the entire corridor, final recommendations of the study, and alternatives that proceeded into the next environmental study phase, did not include any of the alternatives reaching across the river into Wisconsin. The costs of providing a dedicated right-of-way for BRT were not justified, operating costs for a commuter rail operation did not provide adequate benefit, especially within Minnesota, to make it a feasible commuter option, etc. Currently in the final planning stages is the Gateway Corridor Gold Line BRT, a proposed bus rapid transit line that would run next to Interstate 94 for twelve miles in an exclusive lane on or next to Hudson Road and 4th Street between the Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul and Manning Avenue in Washington County. Implementation is expected as soon as 2023.

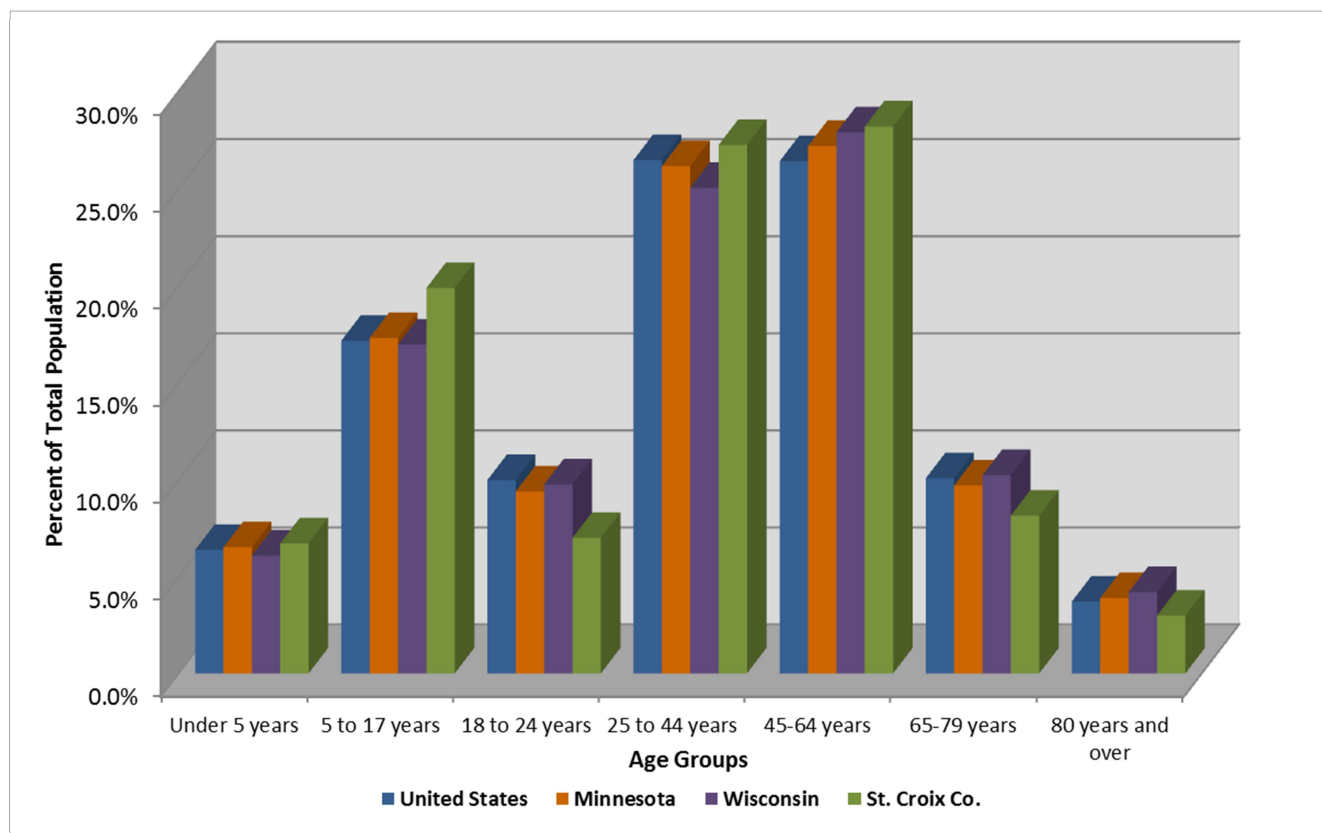
Intercity passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Eau Claire is being pursued by the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition. The Coalition has formed an Organizing Council primarily made up of business persons in the corridor, to work with the Union Pacific Railroad, private operators, and potential investors to determine the viability of a public-private partnership, or fully-private model to provide approximately four round trips daily with 4-6 stops along the route, including at least one, likely two, in St. Croix County. If the determination is made to move ahead with the project, it could potentially be in operation within five years.

Demographics

Age

The age makeup of the population in St. Croix County is generally similar to the national picture, as well as that in the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Some slight variations show that St. Croix County is likely a place where families with school-age children choose to reside, as evidenced by the somewhat higher percentages of children between the ages of five and seventeen, as well as slightly higher percentages in the adult age groups, from 25 to 64. (See Exhibit 4.) The age group showing the most significant numbers below the national or state figures is the college-age category of 18 through 24 years. This is likely telling us that more young people move away from the County to attend college than move to St. Croix County to attend college. That seems reasonable, since UW-RF and most of its student housing are actually in Pierce County and, while Indianhead Technical College is located in New Richmond, there are much larger institutions of higher learning in the Twin Cities area and other Wisconsin locations, which likely draw a large share of the college bound high school graduates from St. Croix County, at least temporarily. More elderly age groups, those 65 and over, as a percent of the total population, are slightly lower than either the national or state estimates.

Exhibit 4: Age of Persons Comparison – U.S., Minnesota, Wisconsin, and St. Croix County

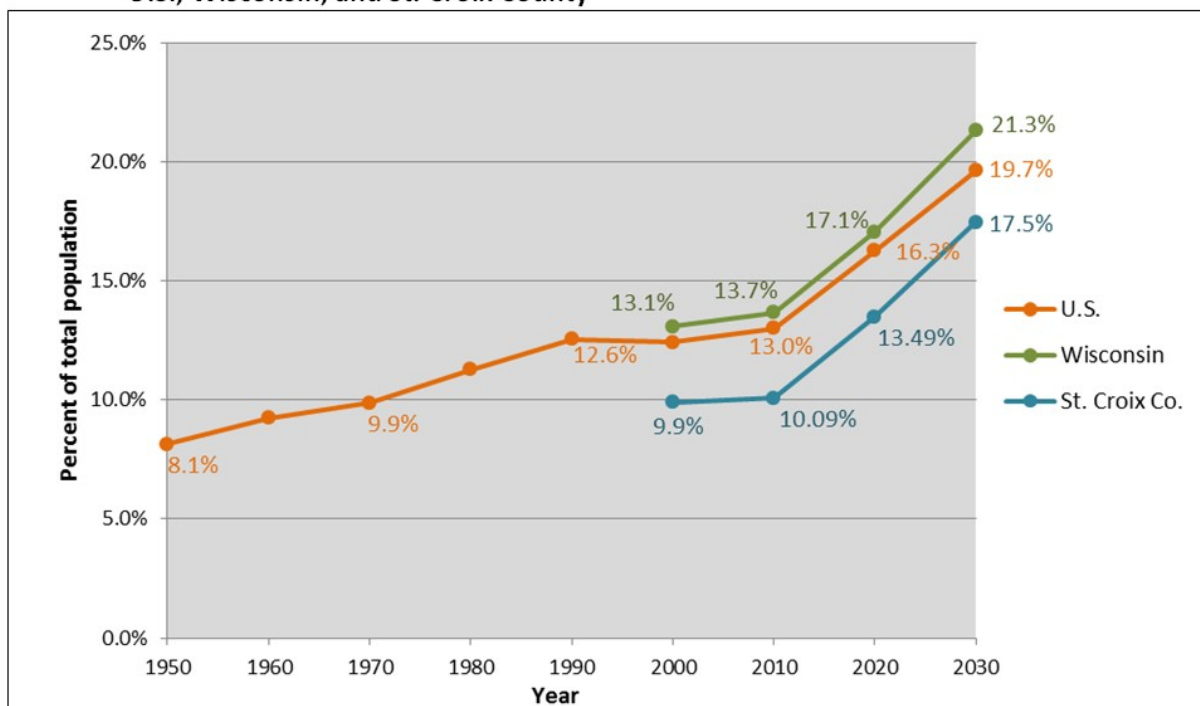


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, 2010-2014.

A couple of age groups that are important to the discussion of transit services, are the ‘millennials’ and the ‘baby boomers’. Those referred to as ‘millennials’ were born between 1982 and 2004, and currently range in age from their early teens to mid-thirties. (Strauss, W., & Howe, N., *Generations: The history of America's future, 1584 to 2069*, New York: Quill/William/Morrow). In terms of transportation, this age group tends to be much less focused on auto-ownership, seeing cars and driving as a waste of time and money. Instead, there is much more focus, generally within this age group, on transit, both trains and buses, as well as bicycling as a mode of transportation. Employers also recognize that the ability to work on electronic devices while making a commute, or traveling to a meeting, makes much more productive use of employees’ time.

The elderly have always been significant users of transit services. Whether to get to medical appointments or to maintain an active social life, many elderly persons turn to transit services when they are no longer comfortable driving their own vehicle. As the ‘baby-boomers’, commonly defined as those born between 1945 and 1964, now in their fifties, sixties, and early seventies, are entering this phase of life, their sheer numbers are likely to strain transit budgets across the nation. A desire to remain active longer, and strong resistance to giving up the car keys, will create an internal conflict. Ultimately, demand for services can be expected to rise dramatically as this longer living and large cohort ages. In 1900, persons age 65 and over made up only 4.1 percent of the total population of the United States. (See Exhibit 5.) This increased to 12.4 percent in the 2000 decennial census, and is projected to climb to nearly twenty percent by 2030. The 2000 census figures for the State of Wisconsin showed that those age 65 and older made up an even greater percentage of the population than the national figure, at 13.1 percent, projected to climb faster than the national rate, to 21.3 percent by 2030. St. Croix County has a smaller proportion of the total population in this 65+ category, approximately 10% in the year 2000. However, the State Data Center (WDOA), projects the 65 and over population of St. Croix County to climb to a 17.5 percent share of the total population in 2030. Based on

Exhibit 5: Population Aged 65+ as a Percent of the Total Population Projected to 2030 - U.S., Wisconsin, and St. Croix County

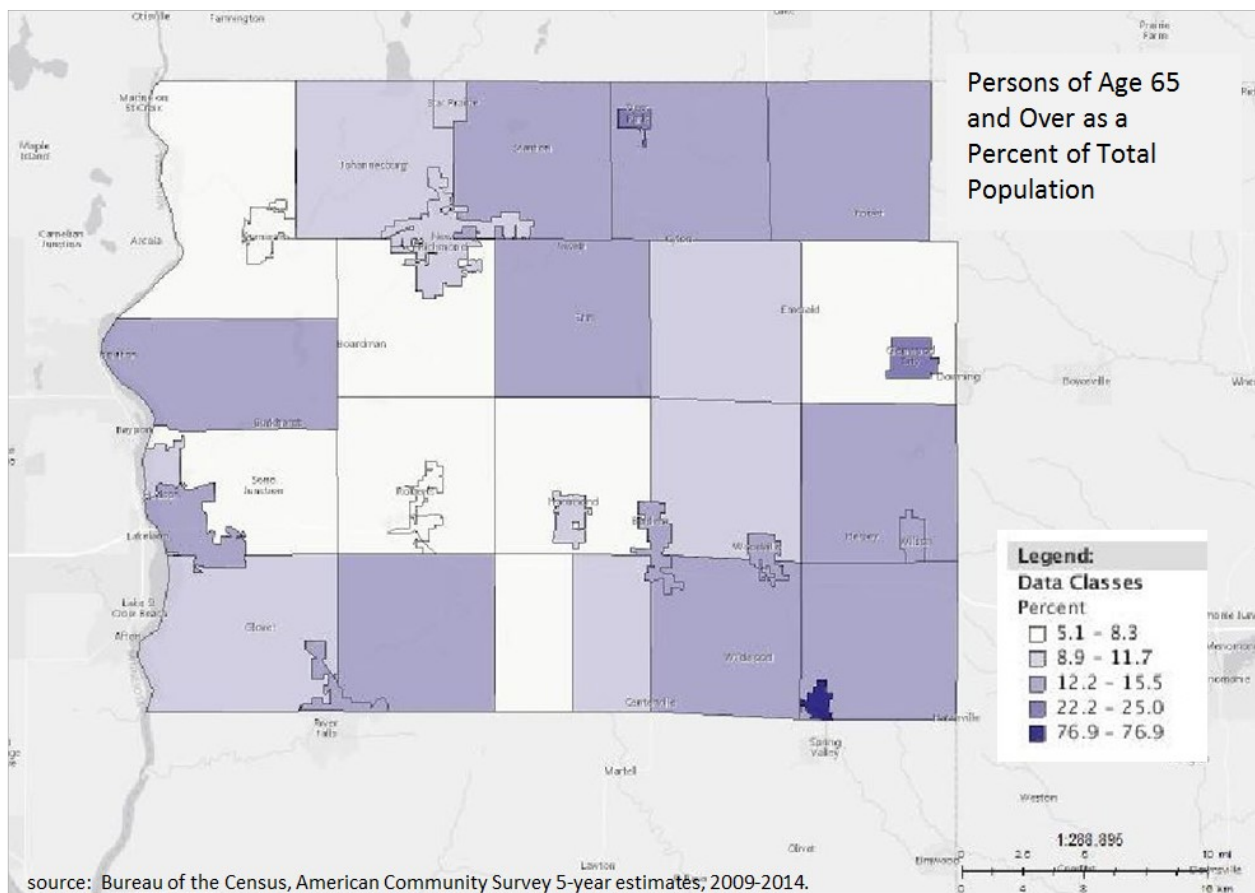


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Decennial Census (1950-2010); Wisconsin Department of Administration

the fact that the current 45 to 64 age cohort's share is higher in St. Croix County than in the State or nation, and that the people currently in that age group will be 61 to 80 years old in 2030, it may be a conservative projection.

Also important to this study is the distribution of the elderly throughout the County. Exhibit 6 shows some concentration of elderly population in the rural areas in the eastern portions of the County, with some exception. (The Village of Spring Valley stands out with a very high percentage of the population, 76.9 percent, of age 65 and over. This is likely an anomaly, such as an elderly residential facility located within an area with a fairly low total population.)

Exhibit 6: Distribution of Persons of Age 65 and Older in St. Croix County



Disability

A population group that often makes up a significant portion of transit riders is persons with disabilities. While many of the transportation programs that serve employment training centers and other educational programs are focused on this population as an agency's clientele, many persons with disabilities are not linked to an agency or a program, but still require accessible transportation services to live independent lives, commute to work, visit friends, go shopping, etc. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) ensures that all public transportation services provide complementary services that are accessible by persons with disabilities, during the same service hours and in the same service area as their general public transit services.

The comparison of St. Croix County's population with ambulatory difficulties, the Census definition most suited to our transportation topic, to the same defined populations in the entire nation and the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota is shown in Exhibit 7. It is helpful to look at this population by age group, as like the general public, different age groups have different travel needs, with 5 to 17 year olds primary trip being to school, to work for adults, etc. St. Croix County has slightly fewer persons with ambulatory difficulties, as a percent of the total population, than the nation in all but the 5 to 17 year category, where the County still exceeds the percentages within each of the two states. In the oldest group, 75 years and older, the County has a higher percentage of persons with ambulatory difficulties than both of the states, though only slightly, but lower than the national figure. In general the variations are small, and St. Croix County seems to have a fairly 'normal' rate of ambulatory difficulties in all age categories.

Exhibit 7: Percent of Total Population with Ambulatory Difficulties – U.S., Wisconsin, Minnesota, and St. Croix County

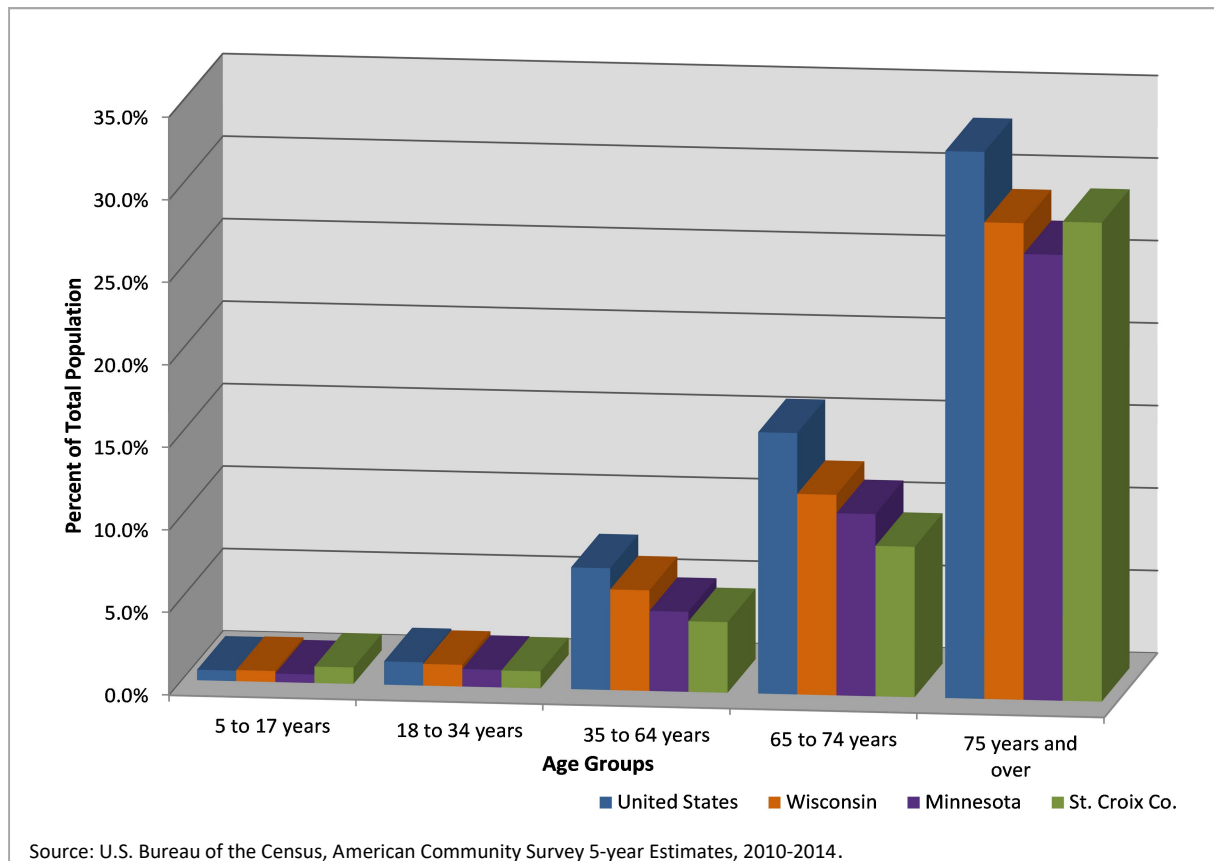


Exhibit 8: Percent of Population Below 150% of Poverty Level

Jurisdiction		% of Total Population Below 150% of Poverty Level
United States		25.2%
State of Wisconsin		21.8%
St. Croix County		11.9%
Cities	Glenwood City	18.9%
	Hudson	12.3%
	New Richmond	22.0%
	River Falls*	29.4%
Villages	Baldwin	16.3%
	Deer Park	11.6%
	Hammond	11.8%
	North Hudson	10.4%
	Roberts	17.1%
	Somerset	21.4%
	Spring Valley	0.0%
	Star Prairie	12.8%
	Wilson	4.7%
	Woodville	23.0%
Towns	Baldwin	7.6%
	Cady	13.2%
	Cylon	17.2%
	Eau Galle	7.4%
	Emerald	12.0%
	Erin Prairie	8.4%
	Forest	6.5%
	Glenwood	19.9%
	Hammond	4.4%
	Hudson	2.3%
	Kinnickinnic	4.4%
	Pleasant Valley	10.3%
	Richmond	11.1%
	Rush River	16.6%
	Somerset	15.8%
	Springfield	4.9%
	St. Joseph	5.8%
	Stanton	13.4%
	Star Prairie	15.9%
	Troy	7.0%
	Warren	7.9%

*- includes entire City of River Falls

source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, ACS 2010-2014

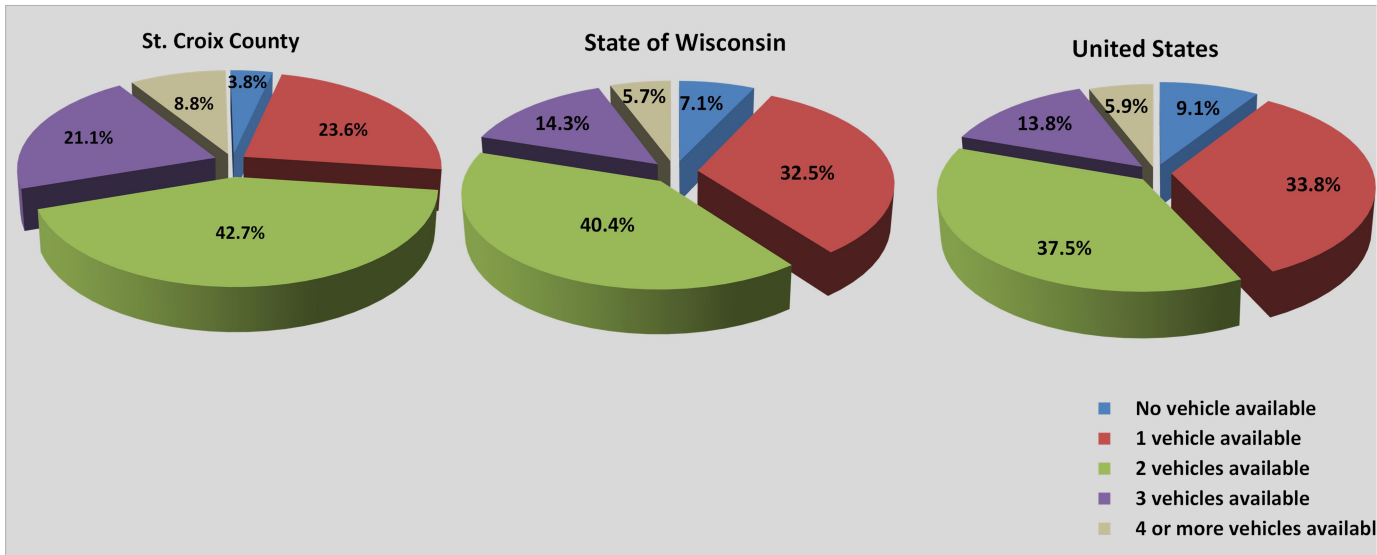
Income and Poverty

One more demographic characteristic that usually indicates a higher likelihood to utilize transit services is income. Low income individuals and households are less likely to own a reliable vehicle, or a second vehicle for additional drivers in the household. When it is available for a needed trip, transit generally offers a more affordable option to driving. In many cases, the lack of reliable transportation can make it difficult or impossible to maintain steady employment. In most of St. Croix County, that makes motor vehicle ownership almost mandatory in order to maintain employment and try to stay above the poverty line. Of course, increasingly, a steady job is not always enough to keep a household out of poverty. Two income households have become the norm, which often leads to increased transportation expense, potentially the ownership of a second vehicle, making it more difficult to meet the financial demands of a family. Exhibit 8 shows a comparison of those in poverty as a percent of the total population within each St. Croix County city, village, or town, as well as the state and nation. While St. Croix County, as a whole, is well below the national or state poverty rate, or in this case those below 150% of the poverty level, there are communities within the County that show much higher levels of poverty, near to those of the nation (25.2%) and even some with rates higher than the State average (21.8%), including the Village of Woodville (23.0%) and the City of New Richmond (22.0%), and the Village of Somerset (21.4%) very near the State average. The community with the highest percent in poverty, using this measure, is the City of River Falls, but only when looking at the entire City. This is indicative of the main UW-RF campus and most of the student housing, on and off campus, lying in Pierce County. (The portion of River Falls that lies within St. Croix County has 8.8 percent of the population at or below 150% of the poverty level.)

The number of vehicles available per household is a factor to be considered when planning for transit service. The data, as shown in Exhibit 9, compares St. Croix County's households by vehicles available to the State and the nation. St. Croix County has significantly fewer no-vehicle households than either the State or the Nation, likely due to a combination of factors, including a higher level of income in St. Croix County and the lack of other travel options available.

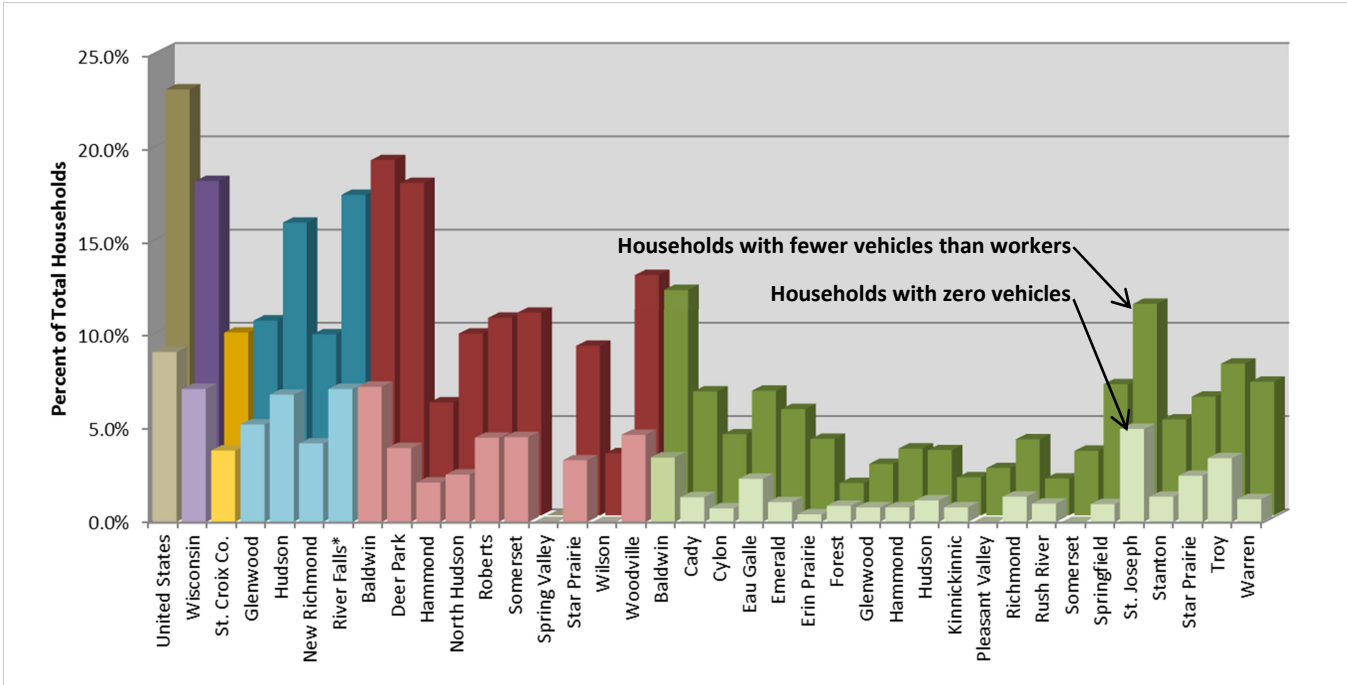
Another way to look at vehicle data within the county is to compare the number of vehicles available relative to the number of workers per household. Exhibit 10 shows the percentage of households within each jurisdiction that has fewer vehicles available than it has workers.

Exhibit 9: Households by Vehicles Available



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, ACS 5-year estimates, 2010-2014.

Exhibit 10: Households with No Vehicles and with Fewer Vehicles than Workers



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, ACS 5-year estimates, 2010-2014

Travel Patterns

It was previously mentioned that a sizeable portion of the people living in St. Croix County work in the Twin Cities area. The most recent data available for work trip flows at the county level is from a special tabulation of the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census), known as the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTTP). This data shows that there are just over 18,600 persons who live in St. Croix County and work in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. That is over 40 percent of the 45,000 employed persons, age of sixteen and over, residing in St. Croix County during the same time period. Of those who commute to work from St. Croix County to the seven counties of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the vast majority (see Exhibit 11) drive alone on their commute. Just over twelve percent carpool, and those who use public transportation or other modes (bicycle, walk, etc.) make up only one percent of the commuters.

Of course, there are workers who make the opposite commute, from their homes in the Twin Cities area to jobs in St. Croix County. This number is considerably smaller, at approximately 3,400 commuters. The use of a single occupant vehicle is at an even higher rate in this direction, with over 91 percent of Twin Cities to St. Croix County commuters driving alone, less than seven percent carpooling, and about one and a half percent using public transportation or other modes. (Exhibit 12.)

While most of this interstate commuting is currently utilizing the Interstate 94 bridge, it is important to remember that the new bridge, currently under construction between Houlton and Stillwater, will be much more attractive to commuters than the old Stillwater lift bridge, and will become a preferred route for many commuters from the northern portions of the County.

Exhibit 11: Work Trip Mode Choice of St. Croix County Residents Working in Twin Cities Area

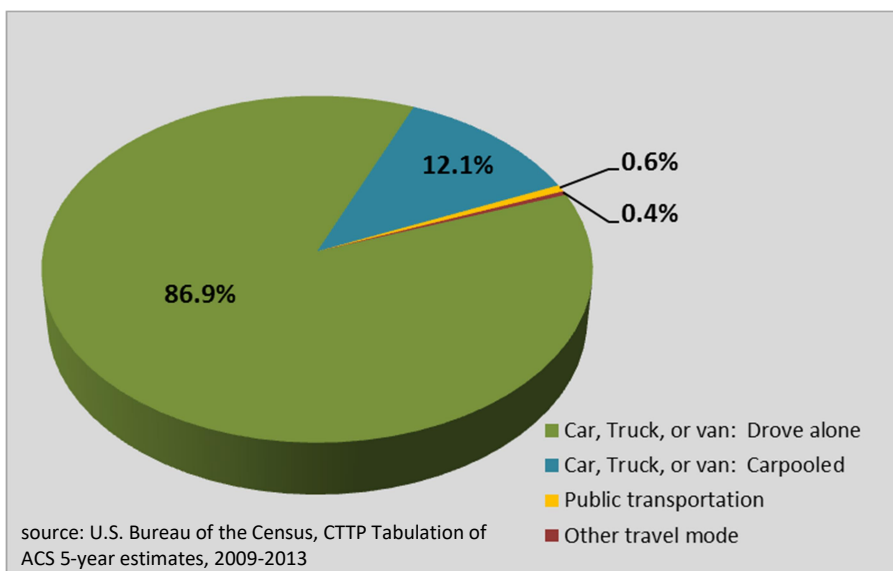
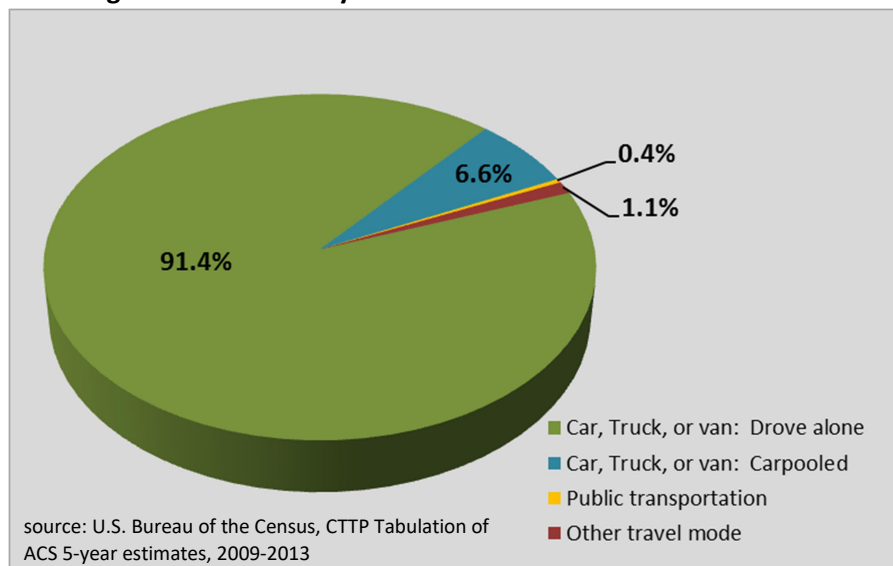


Exhibit 12: Work Trip Mode Choice of Twin Cities Area Residents Working in St. Croix County

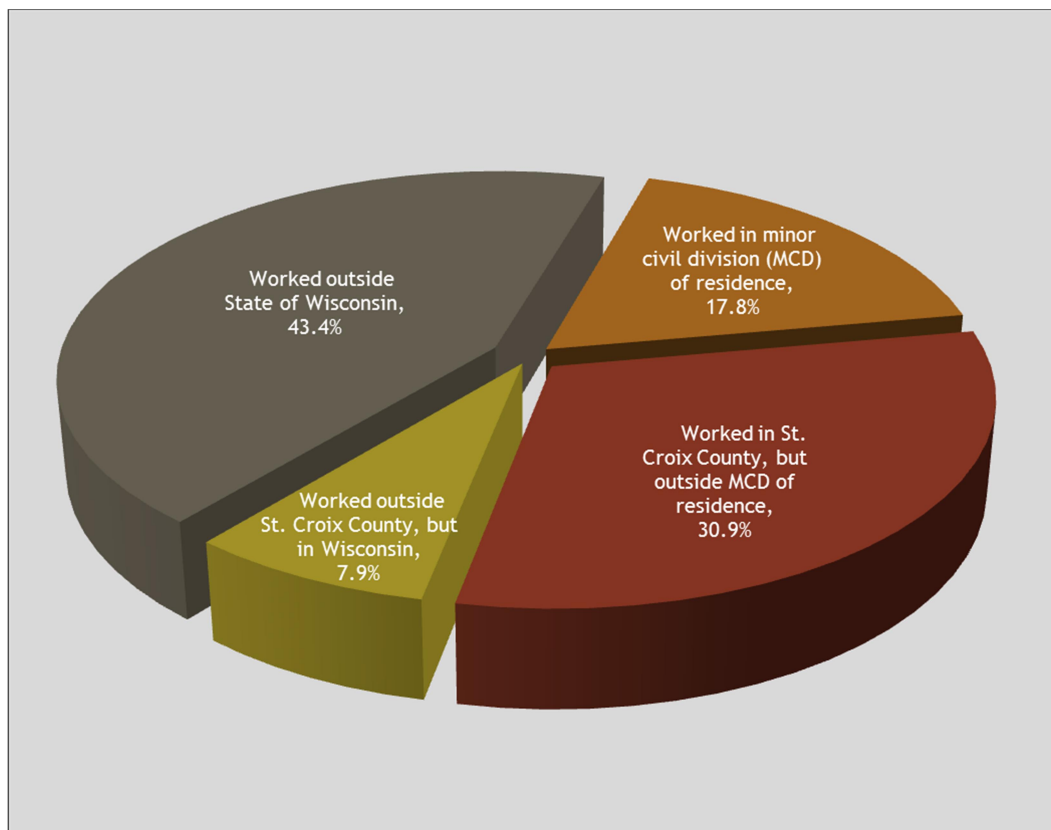


For more specific information on the commuting patterns between the communities within the County, the same data source was consulted, however, the more detailed data was last compiled for the CTPP from the ACS five-year estimates from the years 2006 through 2010. Using this data we will examine the movement of commuters from every town, village, and city in the County to every other town, village, and city, as well as from individual municipalities to and from the nearby counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota. At this point, only the general patterns of the internal work trips will be discussed, but the data will be used in much more detail in the Analysis section of this report.

The communities attracting large numbers of work trips from all other communities are, not too surprisingly, the cities of Hudson, River Falls, and New Richmond; the villages of Baldwin and Somerset, and the Town of Hudson. In terms of the origin-destination pairs that are of highest frequency, many are made up of these employment centers and the neighboring towns or adjacent village or city, such as from the Village of Hudson or the Town of Troy to the City of Hudson or from the Town of Richmond to the City of New Richmond. More distant work trips exist in high numbers between larger communities, such as New Richmond, Hudson, and River Falls.

As a summary of where commuters are going from St. Croix County, Exhibit 13 represents the general destinations of work trips that originate within the County.

**** Exhibit 13: General Work Destinations of St. Croix County Residents**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014).

Analysis

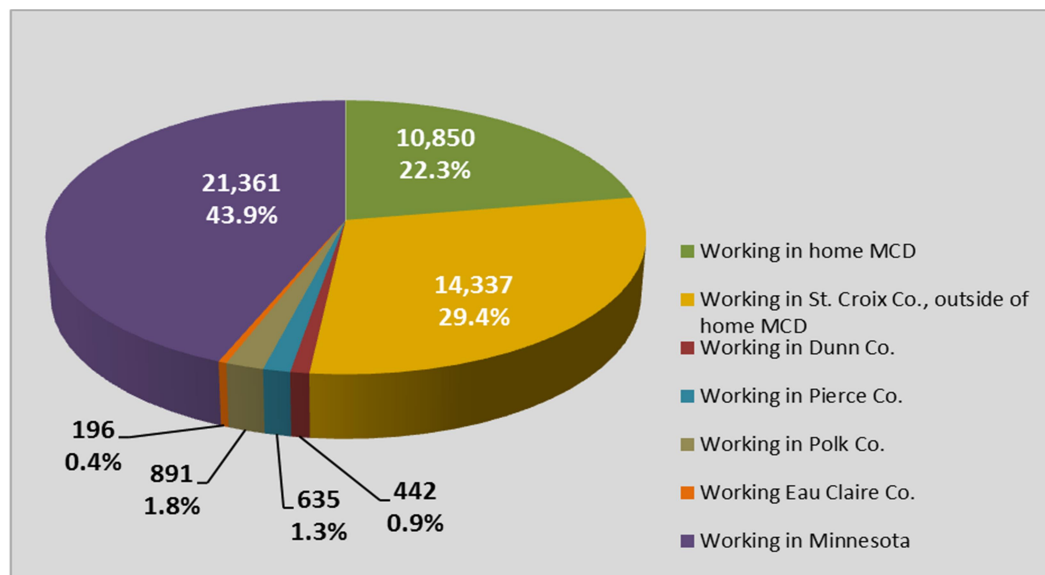
Travel Data

An important element in the planning for transit services is forming a detailed knowledge of travel patterns and habits. The most detailed and accessible data on travel patterns is gathered by the Bureau of the Census through the American Community Survey, a rolling average of 5-years of data based on a sample of households. The trip data presented by the Bureau of the Census is limited to work trips and is primarily reported based on an individual's place of residence. A tool to access trip information in greater detail, including from the perspective of one's place of work, rather than residence, was sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and is known as the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTTP). The most recent iteration of the CTPP that included detail to the level of Minor Civil Division (MCD), was a five year average of the years 2006-2010. While this may seem to be a bit out of date, the intended use in this study is to examine patterns and proportions, rather than precise numbers. Major patterns tend to be much more constant than counts which fluctuate more dramatically with changes in economic factors. It is important to compile the data at this MCD, or city, village, and town level, so we can determine movement between individual communities within St. Croix County, and between St. Croix County communities and surrounding counties and communities. Both the Census Bureau and the AASHTO presented data was used in this analysis, as appropriate. Exhibit 14 shows a summary of the destinations for work trips that originate in St. Croix County. These numbers are slightly different than Exhibit 13 in the previous section, as the detail shown in Exhibit 14 was not reported in the source of the previous table. The breakdown is, however, quite similar.

The most detailed tables showing work trips between the MCD of residence and the MCD of work at included in Appendix C, and include:

- Work trips from each St. Croix County MCD to every other St. Croix County MCD
- Work trips from each St. Croix County MCD to MCDs in Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce, and Polk counties
- Work trips from each St. Croix County MCD to each of seven Minnesota counties: Anoka, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington

Exhibit 14: Destinations for Work Trips Originating in St. Croix County



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. ACS 5-year data (2006-2010). CTPP Tabulation

Work trip data, the only travel data available through the census, is only a part of the picture, as many other types of trips make up our travel habits. School is an important trip purpose to keep in mind for the St. Croix County area, as we have previously noted, there are two technical colleges (New Richmond and River Falls) and a UW campus (River Falls) in the area. The technical colleges, having no residence halls, rely almost completely on students arriving to classes by car. Online classes are increasing in popularity, but physical attendance in classrooms and labs is still the dominant form and, in many instances, cannot be replaced.

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has a sizeable on campus and local off-campus student population, accounting for the large majority of the student body of over 6,000 students. Still, many students commute to classes at UW-RF from another community, many from communities in St. Croix County, and even many from as far away as the Twin Cities area, and other Wisconsin counties. With the rising cost of a college education, there is increased incentive for students to live at home while attending the university. Transit services could help to reduce the cost and a number of other difficulties inherent in commuting by car, such as the expense and difficulty in parking on or near campus, the uncertainty of a car's reliability, and safety issues presented by winter in west central Wisconsin.

Public Survey

A public online survey, in conjunction with this study effort, was active from July through October of 2016. The survey was well advertised through press releases, flyers, emails, presentations and media interviews. Hard copy surveys were also distributed in special circumstance, and at several events, such as the St. Croix County Fair. The hardcopy responses were later entered into the online survey database. The results of the survey confirmed data that was compiled through other sources, primarily through Bureau of the Census and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) data tools as presented in the previous section. The survey also recorded responses to questions that cannot be found in those sources, such as the likelihood of the respondents to use transit services. The survey garnered nearly one thousand responses.

At first glance, the survey results (Appendix D) may seem to be skewed toward residents of the City of Hudson, with 30.54 percent of respondents selecting the City of Hudson as the municipality nearest their place of residence, while the City of Hudson population is actually closer to fifteen percent of the County's population. However, as the survey asked for the municipality *nearest* their place of residence, the representation in the survey is much closer to the total populations of the city of Hudson, Town of Hudson, and the Town of Troy, where most of the population would be nearest to the City of Hudson, at 31.06 percent of the County's population. With a very rough conglomeration of town populations to the nearest city or village, a comparison of census population to survey coverage shows a reasonably good distribution of survey respondents by residence. (See comparison in Exhibit 15.) While the City of River Falls is somewhat overrepresented in the survey, it is important to remember that only a portion of the City of River Falls is located in St. Croix County and that the UW-River Falls campus, where special outreach was done for survey participation, is actually located in Pierce County, but has a significant impact on travel needs in St. Croix County.

One minor conflict appeared when comparing survey responses to census data for workplace trip destination. As shown in Exhibit 16 and similar to the previous comparison, towns in the census data were roughly grouped to represent the 'nearest city or village', as worded in the survey. A big difference between the survey results and census data on workplace shows for the City of Hudson

Exhibit 15: Comparison of Census-Reported Population Distribution to Survey Responses

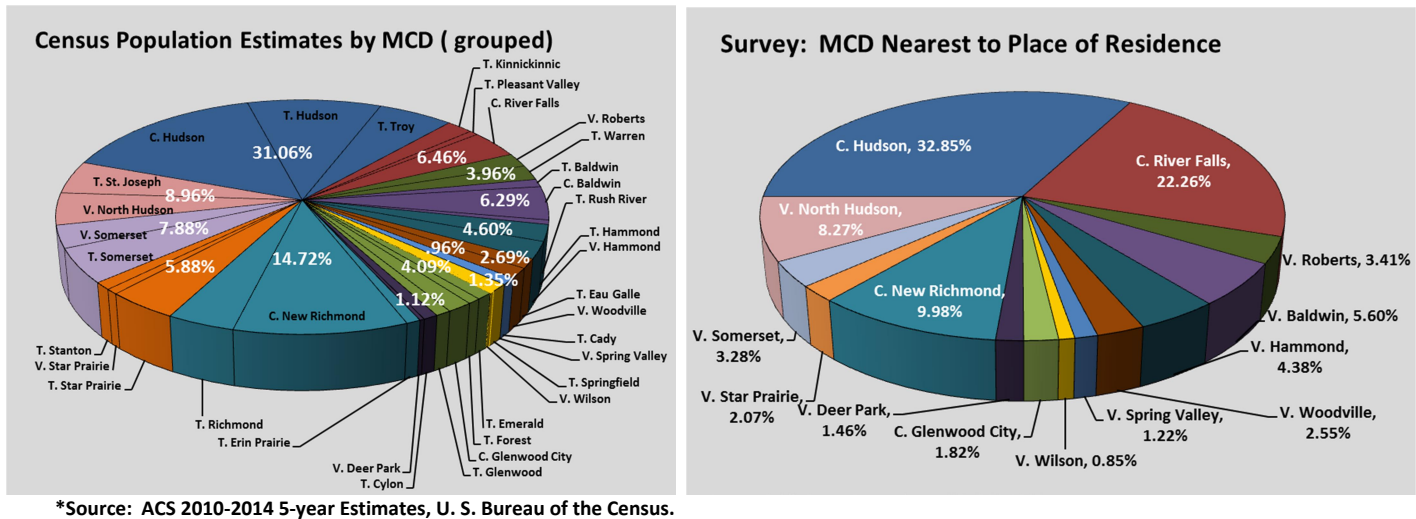
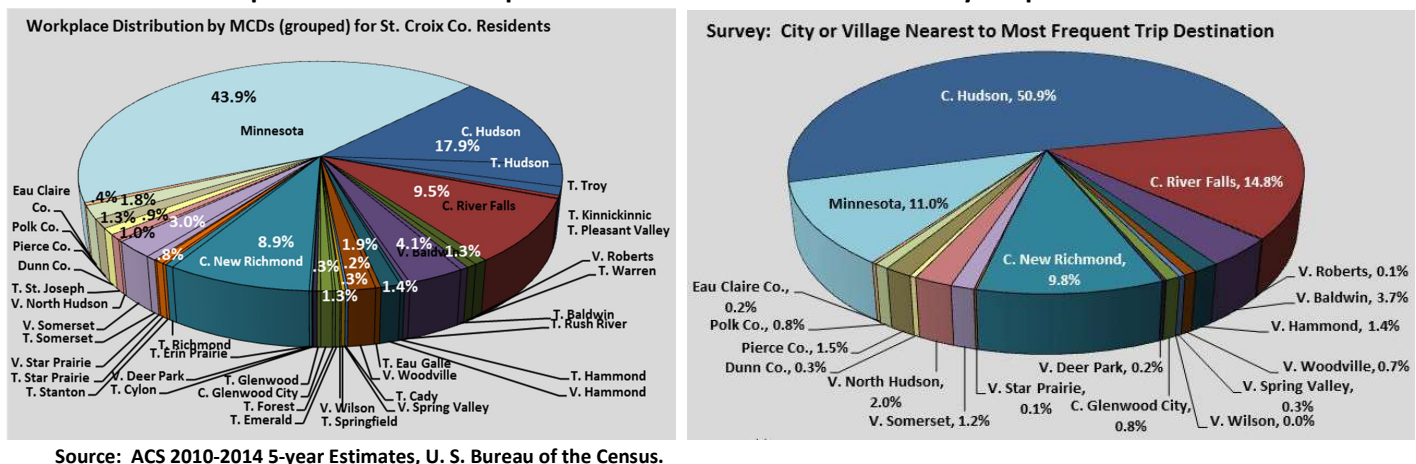


Exhibit 16: Comparison of Census-Reported Work Place Locations to Survey Responses



23

impressive that with ninety percent of the respondents currently driving alone to their most frequent trip destination, 35 percent of the total respondents answered that they would use a 'convenient and economical' transit service at least two or more times per week, with over half of those (20.3 percent) anticipating the use transit nearly every time they make the trip. An additional 17.4 percent noted that they would use transit occasionally for that frequent trip. (See Exhibit 17a.)

In terms of trips other than to their most common destination, just over 25 percent responded to each option: *'I would use transit service often for other trips'*; *'Yes, sometimes'*; and *'Maybe, occasionally'*. (See Exhibit 17b.) That is an extraordinarily strong response of over 50 percent that would consider moving from a largely single occupant vehicle mode of travel to using transit services for their work/school trip, and over 75 percent for their shopping, social, medical, and other less frequent trips. This clearly expresses a considerable desire for transit services, and a strong propensity to use them if they were available.

Exhibit 17a: Survey Response on Transit Use for Most Common Trip

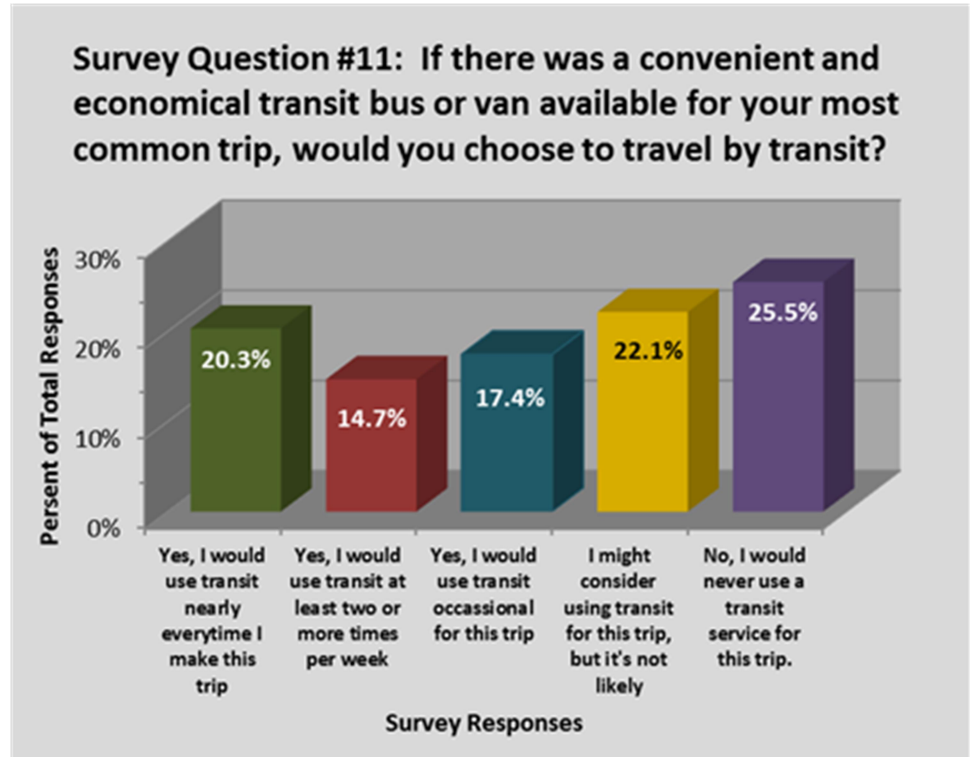
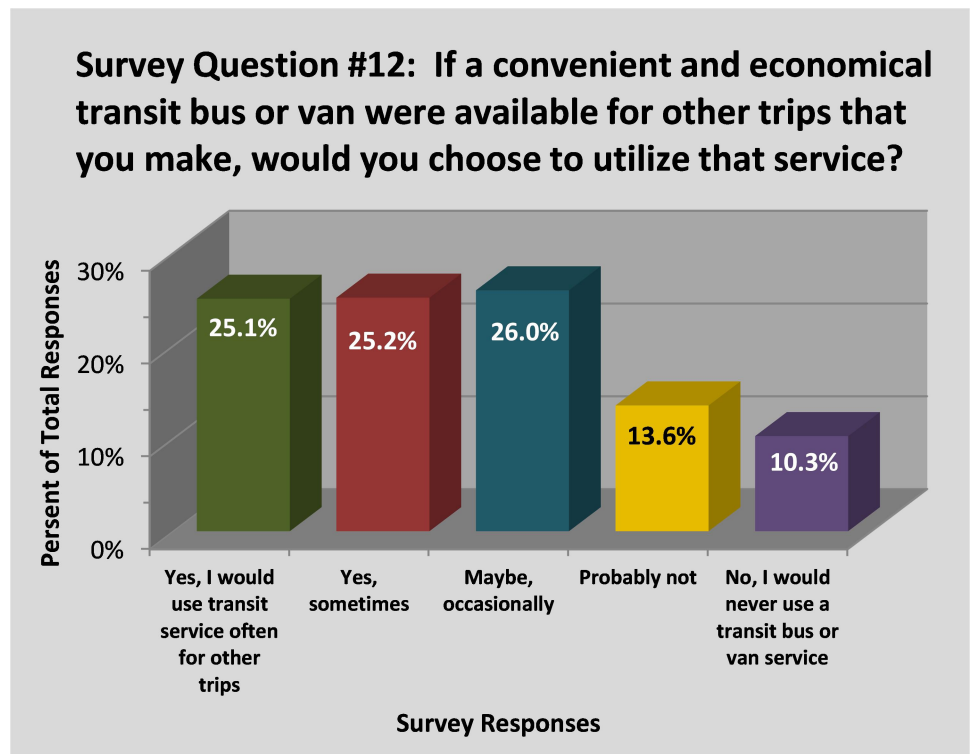


Exhibit 17b: Survey Response on Transit Use for Other Trips



Also, compiled from the survey results, the top five reasons that respondents would choose to use transit included:

- To save money,
- To save gas,
- To improve the environment,
- To use my time more productively while traveling, and
- To avoid driving, biking, or walking in poor weather conditions.

Peer Analysis

This section will summarize seven Wisconsin transit systems and examine key factors of each, such as service type, governance and partnerships, and capital needs for services that could be considered in the development of transit services in St. Croix County. The seven examples were selected based on similarities to the service environment in St. Croix County. The system summaries are followed by a short analysis of the performance of the systems as reported to WisDOT. There are a few examples of rural commuter-based transit systems in Wisconsin, and fewer that offer a more rural fixed route service, often with coordinating shared-ride taxi, or other demand response options. The following 'peers' are intended to serve as examples of services that could be established in St. Croix County, and to offer insight as to how services can interact to create a system that fits the needs of a specific area.

Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT)

Service

Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT) services consist of three buses on commuter-based fixed routes between communities in Crawford, Vernon, and La Crosse counties. Two of the three fixed routes serve Viroqua, Westby, Coon Valley, and La Crosse, with intermittent service to La Farge to serve an individual employer. The other route transports riders between Prairie du Chien, Lynxville, Ferryville, Desoto, Genoa, Stoddard, and La Crosse. Each bus makes several daily round trips, either three or four, Monday through Friday, with services starting at approximately 5:30 a.m. and concluding between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. The service charges a flat fare of \$3.00.

SMRT services started in late 2012. Ridership has increased each year since, with numbers on track to reach over the 20,000 trip mark in 2016, a projected 14 percent increase over 2015 based on performance through September, 2016. Over half (54.1%, as reported in a February 2016 rider survey) of the SMRT riders are using the service to travel to/from work. The remaining 45 percent are split fairly evenly between school trips, medical trips, and other. Fifty-five percent of the riders use the service at least 3-4 times per week, with another 17 percent riding 1-2 days per week. Riders express a very high level of satisfaction with the service with 78.7 percent self-describing as 'very satisfied', and 21.3 percent as 'satisfied'.

Governance/Partnerships

The SMRT service is administered by one of the participating communities, the City of Prairie du Chien, and contracted to a private provider. Funding for the operations is through the federal *Section 5311 - Formula Grants for Rural Areas* program which provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations less than 50,000. The federal dollars currently cover approximately forty-eight percent of the total operating costs, with farebox revenue covering another sixteen percent. The remaining funds are local share, made up of municipal and county funding commitment, as well as ongoing contributions

from businesses, such as regional medical facilities, companies, and a local foundation recognizing the importance of the transportation service to the company or to the larger community.

The development and maintenance of community partnerships is critical to the continuity of the service. Beyond the funding entities noted, other partnerships exist to coordinate services and encourage its use. For instance, students of the local technical college can use their student IDs to ride and their fare is paid to SMRT by the College. Also, the urban fixed route bus system in La Crosse, MTU, and SMRT share physical bus stop sites, however, SMRT vehicles cannot be used for trips with both an origin and destination within the service area of MTU.

Vehicles/Capital

SMRT vehicles are owned by the City of Prairie du Chien, purchased through the State-administered 5311 program, at a 80/20 matching ratio, and leased to the operator for a nominal fee. The service contract with the private provider specifies operating requirements and responsibilities of those who are party to the contract. In this case, the vehicle maintenance is the private provider's responsibility, while storage space is provided by the City. The vehicles can seat 26 passengers, or 22 in seats with two wheelchair securements in use.

Bay Area Rural Transit (BART)

Service

Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) consists of a combination of two rural fixed routes running in opposite directions between the Chequamegon Bay communities of Red Cliff, Bayfield, Washburn, Ashland, and Odanah with two hour headways, a route deviation service within the City of Ashland, and demand response service in the City of Washburn. The fixed route service provides six round trips on weekdays and charges fares based on a zonal system across two counties, ranging from a full adult fare of \$1.50 within one zone, to \$3.50 for four-zone travel. On Saturdays there are just three round trips serving Red Cliff, Bayfield, Washburn, and Ashland.

A few other limited services are also provided by BART: three round trips on Mondays and Thursdays between Ashland and Mellen which, on these two days, links a route, provided by a different entity, between Mellen, Park Falls, and Butternut. BART also provides one round trip on Fridays, between Ashland and Iron River, leaving Iron River at 9:00 a.m. and returning at 3:30 p.m., and demand response service in Park Falls.

BART service started in 1981 with the basic fixed route to the Chequamegon Bay communities and a demand response service in the City of Ashland. The service has since grown and serves approximately 150,000 rides per year.

Governance/Partnerships

BART is operated under a Transit Commission with representation from Bayfield and Ashland counties, the City of Ashland, and service participants. The system is funded by federal and state transit funding sources totaling sixty percent of the annual budget (approximately \$1.4 million in 2014). Farebox revenue covers 13.5 percent and local sources make up the remaining 26.4 percent.

The system coordinates with a number of other agencies and transit providers, including Ashland County Aging Unit, Bad River Transit, Miskwaabekong Red Cliff Transit, Park Falls, and the Lauri Jean Zach Center (LJZC) provides rides in the Glidden/Park Falls/Mellen area and has a mobility manager on staff to help address the specific needs of the area's residents.

Vehicles/Capital

All BART buses are accessible, and are equipped with bicycle racks on a seasonal basis. In 2013, a new building to serve as a transit garage and BART offices was built in Ashland.

Dunn County Transit (DCT)**Service**

Dunn County Transit (DCT) started providing transit services in 2011. DCT now provides fixed route service in the City of Menomonie, primarily directed toward UW-Stout students, as well as specialized on-demand services for elderly and disabled passengers – on a rotating zonal schedule throughout the City. Service hours for the fixed routes are Monday through Friday 7:20 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Saturday from 9:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The demand response service hours are 7:20 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. In order to meet ADA complementary paratransit service requirements after on-demand service hours, fixed route buses also do route deviations within the ¾ mile service area in the evenings to serve those passengers who are unable to access the fixed routes. The fixed route service provides about 170,000 trips annually, while the paratransit service provides approximately 12,000 trips per year. The service is narrowly focused on the City of Menomonie, with the rest of the County receiving service for the elderly and persons with disabilities through the ADRC's volunteer driver program.

Governance/Partnerships

DCT was formed in 2010 when the County purchased the assets of a long-time non-profit provider of elderly and disabled transportation service in the County. The Transit Commission role was taken on by the County Highway Committee, and federal and state grants were garnered and fixed routes were devised to primarily serve UW-Stout students travel between campus areas and throughout the community. To date, UW-Stout student fees make up the local share of the funding, with no city or county funds supporting this service. In turn, students ride fare-free with their student identification cards. Federal and State funding make up 63 percent of the modest operating costs of the system which totaled \$621,890 in 2014. The Dunn County ADRC partners with DCT in funding the demand response service by passing through a portion of their State specialized transit (\$85.21) allocation.

Vehicles/Capital

DCT maintains a small fleet of small accessible buses for use in their fixed route and demand response services. These are purchased through the State-managed federal 5311 program. A bus maintenance/garage facility was built in 2015.

Western Kenosha County Transit (WKCT)**Service**

Western Kenosha County Transit (WKCT) provides fixed route bus service connecting rural Kenosha County to the City of Kenosha, Monday through Friday, with hourly headways from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (eleven round trips), and three daily round trips (Monday through Friday) to the Antioch, Illinois Metra Station serving commuter trains into Chicago. The fixed route into Kenosha can also accommodate route deviation for pick-up and drop-off within ¾ mile of the route, requiring one hour advanced notice and with the addition of one dollar to the normal two dollar fare. Free transfers are available to Kenosha Area Transit, the City's urban transit system. All buses are equipped with bicycle racks and are accessible to persons with disabilities. Monthly passes are

available for all fixed route services (\$20), and punch cards (a \$22 value for \$20) that can be used on all services.

There is also fixed route service, one round trip on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, between Twin Lakes and Lake Geneva, and one round trip on Tuesdays and Thursdays from Paddock Lake to Antioch, Illinois, and back. Home pick up is available at no additional cost over the normal two dollar fare. Door-to-door services are also available to senior dining sites and to the food pantry, with fares of five dollars (\$3.00 to senior/disabled passengers). The fare for riders to the food pantry is paid by the non-profit agency that sponsors the pantry.

Governance/Partnerships

WKCT is administered through the Aging and Disability Resource Center which contracts with a private non-profit to provide the service. Operating and capital funding is through the Federal Transit Administration's 5311 program, the State, and Kenosha County.

Vehicles/Capital

Four vehicles are utilized on a daily basis in the operation of the deviated fixed route and the demand response serviced in western Kenosha County. All of the vehicles are lift-equipped small buses with bicycle racks. They were purchased by the County with federal and local funds and leased to the provider.

Door County Transit Services

Service

Door County Department of Human Services provides a variety of transit services to meet the needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, and the general public, including deviated fixed route service, paratransit, and shared-ride taxi services. The deviated fixed routes consist of five routes, each connecting the County's largest city, Sturgeon Bay, with one or more of the smaller communities in the county. They are limited to two round trips per day, one each in the morning and one each in the mid to late afternoon. Three of the routes have a one-way flat fare of three dollars, one has a fare of two dollars, and one at five dollars. The buses can deviate off the designated route up to a half mile to pick up or drop off passengers. Route deviations require advanced notice.

Shared-ride taxi services are also available based on a zonal system. Fares vary depending upon the distance or number of zones that are traveled, and can range from \$3.50 (\$1.75 for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and students) within Sturgeon Bay, to \$15.00 per trip between the far northern-most zone and the south zone. Most of these services run from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., on Saturdays, and 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays. The northern zone is served only on Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Governance/Partnerships

All of the services are administered by the Door County Department of Human Services – Senior Resource Center. The County contracts with a private provider and a private non-profit to handle dispatching and service provision.

Vehicles/Capital

All of the vehicles are wheelchair accessible small buses and were purchased by the County with federal and local funds under the federal 5311 program and are leased to the providers.

Namekagon Transit

Service

Namekagon Transit offers three deviated fixed routes in western Sawyer County that all meet at a transfer center located at the LCO Casino, just east of Hayward, and run from 8:30 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. Riders may flag the bus down along the route, as long as it is a safe place for the bus to stop, if they are not near a designated stop. (This is typical of fixed routes through sparsely populated areas.) Those riders that wish to board where there is not a designated stop are expected to call before 1:00 p.m. the day prior to their trip to have the bus deviate to their location or to make the driver aware of their boarding location along the route.

Another service, which operates more like a demand response model, is called Door-Stop Bus service. Each of the counties participating in the service (Barron, Sawyer, and Washburn), have slightly different service models. In Barron County, there are approximate pick up times scheduled at locations in designated communities along a 'route' on specified days of the week. Riders need to call a day in advance of their desired travel time, and will be scheduled for pick up when the vehicle is scheduled to be in their area. Fares are one dollar, or fifty cents with a Namekagon Transit ID card. The services start at 9:00 a.m. in the community designated as the starting point for that day. The conclusion of the day varies, depending on the length of the route that day, somewhere between 2:45 p.m. and 3:45 p.m.

The Door Stop Bus service in Sawyer County is more flexible, with origins and destinations anywhere in the County, as scheduled at least a day in advance. Service hours are 6:00 a.m. and 8:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. ADA paratransit needs can be accommodated when requested. The fare for Sawyer County service is one dollar, or two dollars during morning and afternoon peak travel times. In Washburn County, the service offered is local demand response service within the communities of Spooner and Shell Lake. The community level service is available from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

While the services provided by Namekagon Transit are fairly diversified, the service hours and frequencies are, in most cases, render the services not conducive to regular daily work or school travel, with the possible exception of day shift work at the LCO Casino. The bulk of the services are directed more toward the elderly and persons with disabilities making shopping, medical, or nutrition trips on a weekly, or less frequent, basis.

Governance/Partnerships

Namekagon Transit is a non-profit corporation that provides services to Sawyer County and the neighboring counties of Washburn and Barron. There is a transit board that is specific to Namekagon Transit in Sawyer County. Services to the other counties are determined by the specific county needs and the amount that each county is willing to contribute. Namekagon Transit is the recipient of federal and state dollars, with the counties and the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe contributing to the local match. Partnerships exist between the three counties and the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe and the provider in terms of funding, service development, etc., however, there is not an overall governing board for all services. There are only a couple of opportunities for services that cross county lines, including one weekly 'shopping run' from Hayward (Sawyer County) to Rice Lake (Barron County), and a weekly opportunity for 12 or more passengers to schedule a group trip on Mondays that could travel across county lines.

Vehicles/Capital

Namekagon Transit owns approximately 25 buses of various sizes, all of which are wheelchair accessible. The buses were purchased with federal 5311 funds, matched by local funds, as was the facility in Hayward that houses the system's bus garage and maintenance facilities and offices.

Rusk County Transit Commission (RCTC)**Service**

Rusk County Transit Commission (RCTC) provides demand response service in the City of Ladysmith and two deviated fixed routes in the rural areas of the county. One route operates from Ladysmith to Conrath, Sheldon, Tony, Glen Flora, Ingram, Hawkins, and back to Ladysmith; and another route from Ladysmith to Bruce, Weyerhaeuser, and back to Ladysmith. The rural routes operate Monday through Friday with pick-up times between 6:30 and 8:30 a.m., and return times between 3:15 and 5:30 p.m. Reservations are made in advance and vehicles can deviate from designated routes up to four miles. The fare for the rural route service is \$3.00 per one-way trip.

The demand response buses within the City of Ladysmith provide door to door service. A 24-hour advance reservation is recommended and service hours are: Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and a 'church route' is operated from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Sunday. The base fare is \$1.50, or \$.75 for persons with disabilities and the elderly. Tokens and monthly passes are available at discounted rates.

Governance and Partnerships

The transit commission in Rusk County was formed in 2012. Service was previously administered through the Indianhead Community Action Council (ICAC). The County is the subrecipient of federal and state funding, which is passed through to the Commission. The Commission's board is made up of two representatives from the City of Ladysmith, three representatives from Rusk County, and two from (ICAC). The system utilizes federal 5311 funding, State funding from both sections 85.20 and 85.21, with the latter being used as match for vehicle purchases. Like several of the other transit providers discussed, the Commission receives grant funds for a mobility management position. The local share of the funding is provided by the City of Ladysmith, as well as the County.

Some interesting local partnerships have developed to help meet specific local needs. Local churches provide financial assistance for the Sunday 'church route', and a local supermarket pays for trips by seniors to the grocery store on Wednesdays. RCTC also partners with Rusk and Barron counties' Veterans Service offices to provide trips to the Veterans' medical facility in Minneapolis.

Vehicles/Capital

All vehicles are lift-equipped, with some able to carry 26 passengers, and some smaller. Two vehicles used in Ladysmith are equipped with bicycle racks. The vehicles have been purchased with federal and local funding. The County is using some surplus, or "trust fund", 85.21 funds to help meet the local match on some vehicle purchases. The Commission also has a bus garage and office facility in Ladysmith.

Peer System Performance Comparisons

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is required to have cost efficiency standards for the state's transit systems, as specified by Wis. Statute 85.20 and Administrative Rule TRANS 4. The cost efficiency report considers the six performance indicators which are used to compare the relative efficiency of transit systems. Wisconsin transit systems are broken into seven categories for the purposes of the report: small community bus, medium-community bus, commuter bus, shared-ride taxi services, county-wide taxi services, as well as Madison and Milwaukee County peer groups. Dividing the systems in this manner allows for fair and reasonable comparisons. Madison Metro, Milwaukee County Transit System, and medium-sized bus systems are compared to a group of nationwide peers, all of whom report their statistics to the National Transit Database. The analyses for the small community and commuter bus system and shared-ride taxi services, like those discussed in this section, use a statewide peer group for comparison, as comparable national transit data are not available. The following table shows the data that was submitted to WisDOT by the seven 'peer' transit systems that have offered several models for potential St. Croix County services. The column labeled 'Tier C' is the composite of all 49 bus and shared-ride taxi systems in communities with populations between 2,500 and 50,000 persons.

Exhibit 18: Operating Data Comparison of Peer Systems

Data Item	Tier C (total)	Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit	Bay Area Rural Transit	Dunn Co. Transit Commission	Door County	Western Kenosha Co. Transit	Namekagon Transit	Rusk County Transit Commission
Population Served		15,931	19,285	43,917	27,976	16,388	61,698	14,790
Passengers	2,951,323	33,244	150,410	180,481	65,626	13,352	79,669	66,295
Total Expenses	\$27,532,673	\$709,692	\$1,399,759	\$621,890	\$1,008,641	\$483,919	\$1,603,294	\$1,085,920
Revenue*	\$6,339,276	\$156,842	\$188,967	\$81,468	\$252,160	\$17,905	\$205,222	\$163,974
Revenue Hours	777,503	11,290	27,892	11,121	28,187	10,731	36,841	15,442
Revenue Miles	10,235,175	122,007	563,624	146,467	329,364	203,990	687,538	259,404

Source: WisDOT 2014 Annual Transit Report, WisDOT, 2015.

*- Revenue figures for the individual systems are estimates, computed from the operating ratio and total expenses, as reported in WisDOT's annual report.

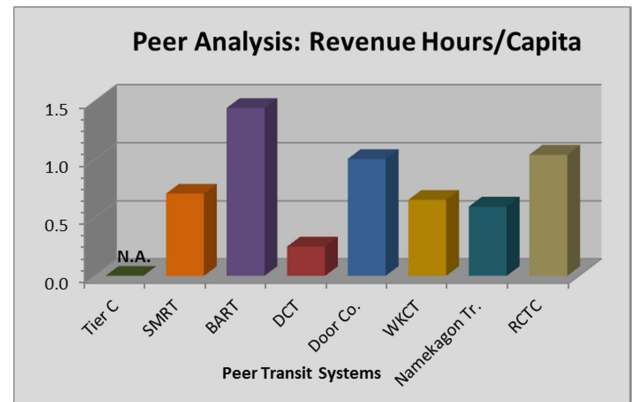
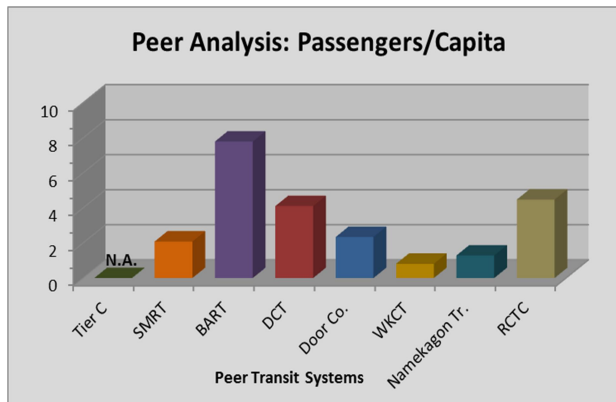
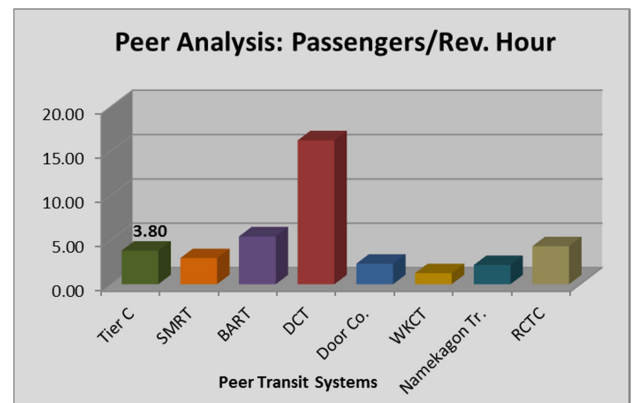
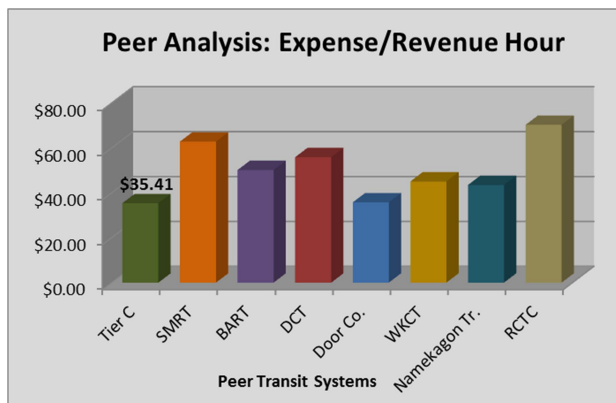
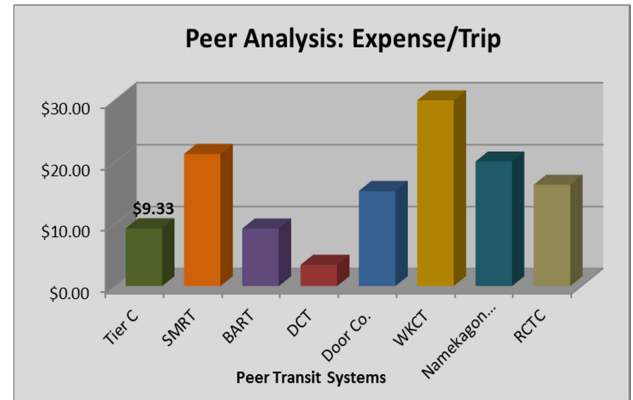
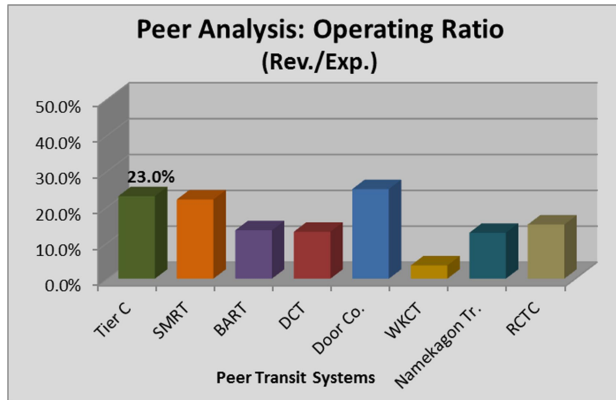
This data was then used to compute measures that make these varied systems more comparable. The following tables show the seven systems, and the figures for the entirety of Tier C, for the six performance measures considered by WisDOT, as shown in each graph title on the following page.

Upon examination of the performance measures, it is first apparent that there is quite a large variation between the systems in each performance measure. This is primarily indicative of the variation of the type of service, provided (i.e. shared-ride taxi, fixed route, commuter, elderly and disabled, etc.), and the type of area served, (i.e. dense vs. sparse population). Dunn County Transit, as an example, provides the bulk of their services within the City of Menomonie and is largely directed toward the needs of the UW-Stout student population. This allows for a very focused service, fewer hours of service tailored to the student needs, and a concentration of passengers with limited origins and destination, resulting in a very good performance in terms of passengers per revenue hour and a low cost per trip. However, a focus on a particular sector of the population can lead to a lower performance in per capita measures, such as passengers (trips) per capita and revenue hours per capita. In contrast, Namekagon Transit routes travel long distances in mostly low density areas. While their ridership is substantial, the number of revenue miles and hours are high,

Their services are varied to meet the diverse needs of commuters to the LCO Casino and shoppers from scattered locations to relatively distant communities, as well as some Saturday and Sunday services. This results in higher costs per trip and lower passenger trips per hour.

Consideration of these measures is important in determining the type of service to best serve a particular population or trip density. In short, the more that trip origins and destinations can be concentrated, the more efficiently transit systems can perform. When serving lower density areas, or trips with scattered or distant origins and destinations, maintaining reasonable efficiencies can be more challenging. Finding the right type of transit service, as well as the appropriate hours of service and fares, is necessary to reach a balance between the travel needs of the public and the commitment of local communities, the County, and other funding agents to provide the services. The data and measures for these seven systems also provide realistic measure for service alternatives to be considered in St. Croix County.

Exhibit 19: Performance of Peer Systems



Source: WisDOT 2014 Annual Transit Report, WisDOT, 2015.

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Alternatives

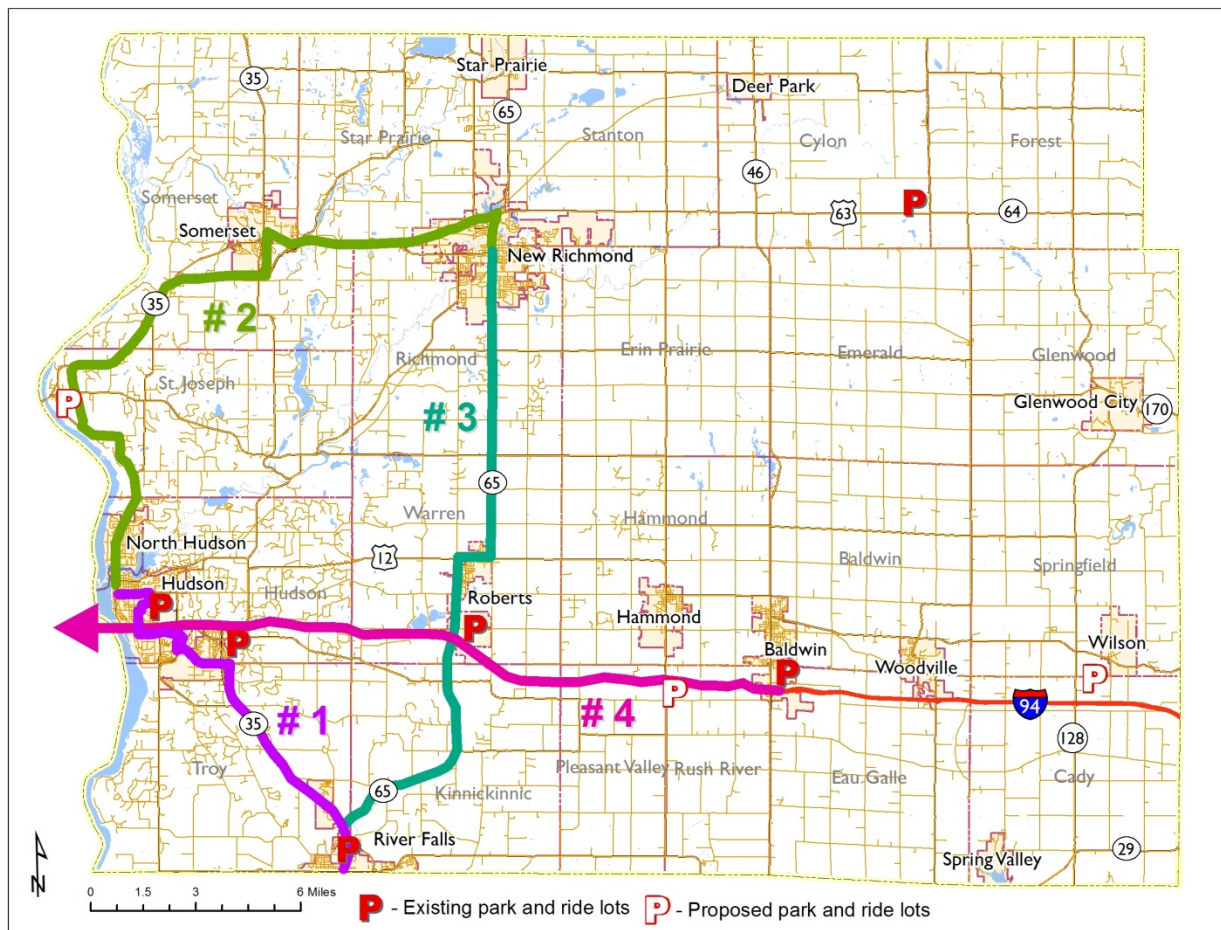
Service Alternatives

There are several types of transit services that can be considered for implementation in St. Croix County. With the variation in population and trip density across the County, there is not likely a 'one-size fits all' service for the entire area. This section looks at the potential applications for each type of service, estimated costs and ridership projections. It is also noted that efforts are underway to institute intercity rail between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities, likely have two stops in St. Croix County, Baldwin and Hudson. The alternatives considered in this section, do not initially account for future passenger rail service, as it is still somewhat uncertain. However, there are some suggestions of how the transit alternatives could be modified to integrate with future passenger rail service, when it becomes available.

Fixed Route Service

Fixed route services and deviating fixed routes work best in areas of higher population density, but also between points or communities where the numbers of regular, or commuter, trips are high. There are four corridors that could likely support a fixed route. These general corridors are seen on Exhibit 20 and include Corridor #1 between Hudson and River Falls, Corridor #2 between Hudson and New Richmond, Corridor #3 between New Richmond and River Falls, and Corridor #4 between Baldwin and Woodbury (or St. Paul). Each corridor is shown in a higher level of detail, as a suggestion to serve particular destinations, later in this section. Cost and funding estimates of the three routes, assuming the stated schedules, appear in Exhibit 24, following the Route #3 description.

Exhibit 20: Fixed Route Corridor Alternatives



Deviated fixed routes are typically utilized where origins and destinations are too scattered to serve effectively with a pure fixed route. Deviations are typically within a defined distance of the route to pick up or drop off passengers at their home and/or destination. While deviating from a route in this fashion can make the a route more convenient for some riders, it does increase the travel time for all of the riders, and makes it more difficult to keep to a schedule, which can reduce the system's reliability and make transit a less attractive travel option. Deviations can also be used to access specific destinations that do not fit well into the actual route, or not commonly desired, on an 'as requested' basis.

While details of the fixed route proposals would need to be worked out prior to implementation, and fine-tuned even after routes are running, the following proposed route details will provide some idea of how the routes could work, suggest key stops, and touch on other operating elements that should be considered.

Proposed Route #1

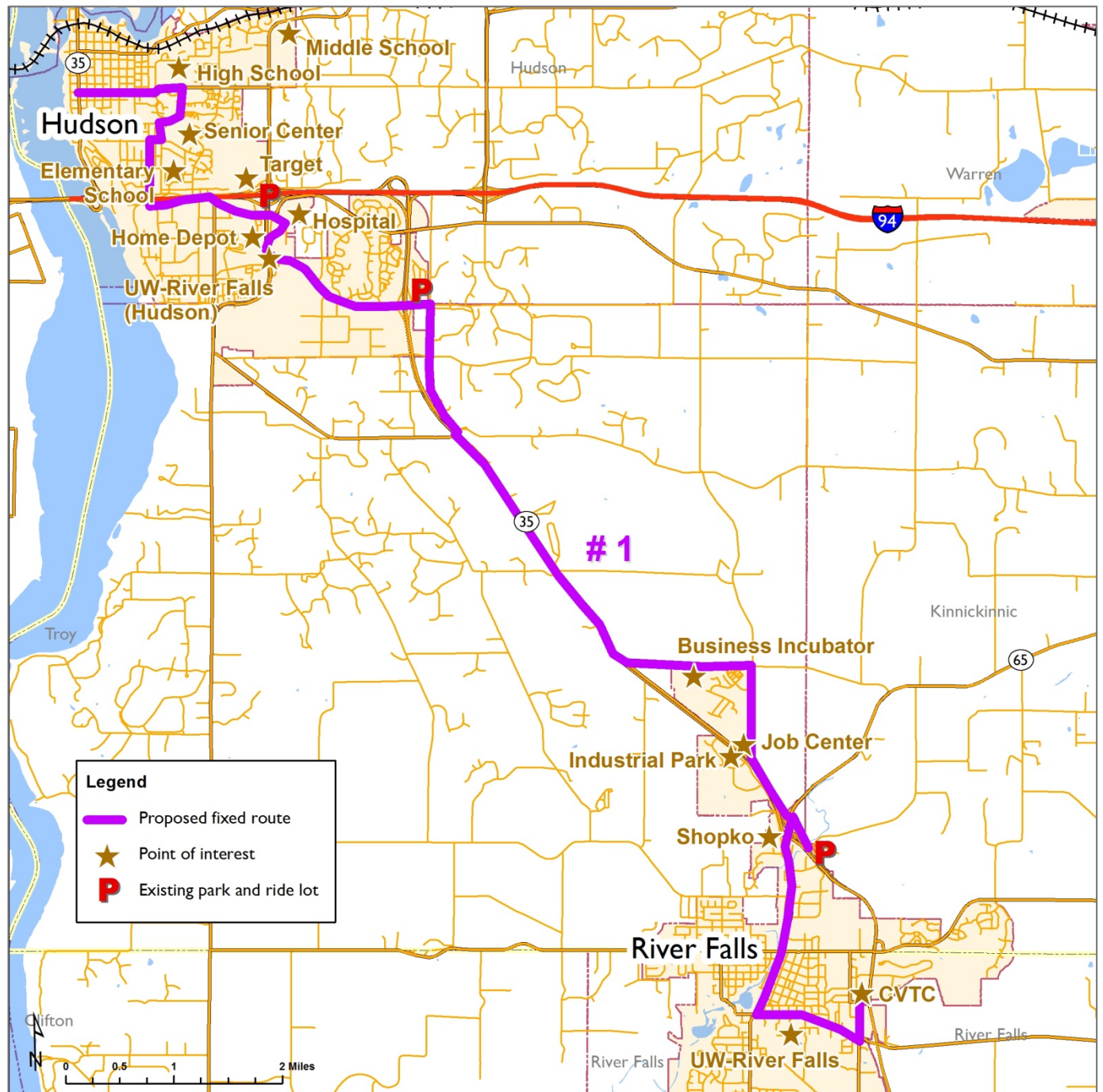
The volume of traffic making commuting between Hudson and River Falls is quite high. According to census data cited earlier in this study, there are over nine hundred people living in either River Falls or Hudson that work in the other community, accounting for nearly 2,000 trips per day. That doesn't take into account the trips that originate or conclude just outside the two cities, such as in the towns of Troy or Kinnickinnic. Nor do those numbers include non-work trips between the communities, such as commuting UW-River Falls students, shopping trips, or other personal business trips that are not tabulated by the Bureau of the Census. Traffic count data compiled by WisDOT in 2015 shows 16,200 average vehicles per day on STH 35 between Hudson and River Falls. Exhibit 21 shows a suggested route for this corridor, to serve a high number of destinations along the route while still providing a reasonable travel time to encourage ridership.

Assuming this route could be run a each direction in 30 minutes, it is suggested that it run each arrive at the endpoints at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour, or similar, allowing for riders to comfortably reach their destinations by typical class or work starting times on the hour or half hour. This is a suggestion to keep in mind when the route is going through final design. Using this assumption, along with a service day of 12 hours (6:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.) Monday through Friday, and 10 hours on Saturdays (8:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.), and a cost estimate of \$50 per hour, roughly a contracted cost figure used by MRRPC in the analysis of new S.M.R.T. routes, this route would cost roughly \$182,000 per year to operate.

Proposed Route #2

The work trips apparent in the census, between the cities of New Richmond and Hudson, are considerably less than those between Hudson and River Falls, however, with something similar to the routing suggestion in Exhibit 22, the villages of Somerset and North Hudson are added to the work trips to a total estimate of 1,190 work trips per day, or over 2,300 trips with the expected return trip. In addition, the proposed park and ride lot near the new St. Croix River crossing could make this an attractive meeting spot for carpoolers into the Twin Cities. An alternate route between Hudson and New Richmond would follow CTH A, but the only somewhat shorter travel time along this route would not be expected to make up for its lack of intermediate stops and inability to access the new river crossing. Also shown on Exhibit 22 is a potential route deviation by request, represented by the dashed line to the St. Croix Correctional Facility. A high number of requests for trips to destinations such as this one should prompt a review and consideration as a potential route realignment, once service is in place and travel patterns are better established. On an occasional basis, however, such destinations can be adequately served as a route deviation.

Exhibit 21: Proposed Fixed Route #1



Similar to the suggestions for route #1, this route would need to run on a well-timed cycle. If each one way trip leg can be run in 45 minutes, the route could be leaving New Richmond at 6:15 a.m., 7:45 a.m., 9:15 a.m., etc., with the last round trip leaving New Richmond at 4:45 p.m., from Hudson at 5:30 p.m., and returning to New Richmond at 6:15 p.m., a total of nine round trips per day, Monday through Friday. Assuming Saturday operation from 7:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., this alternative could be expected to have a total operating cost of approximately \$179,400 per year.

Exhibit 22: Proposed Fixed Route #2

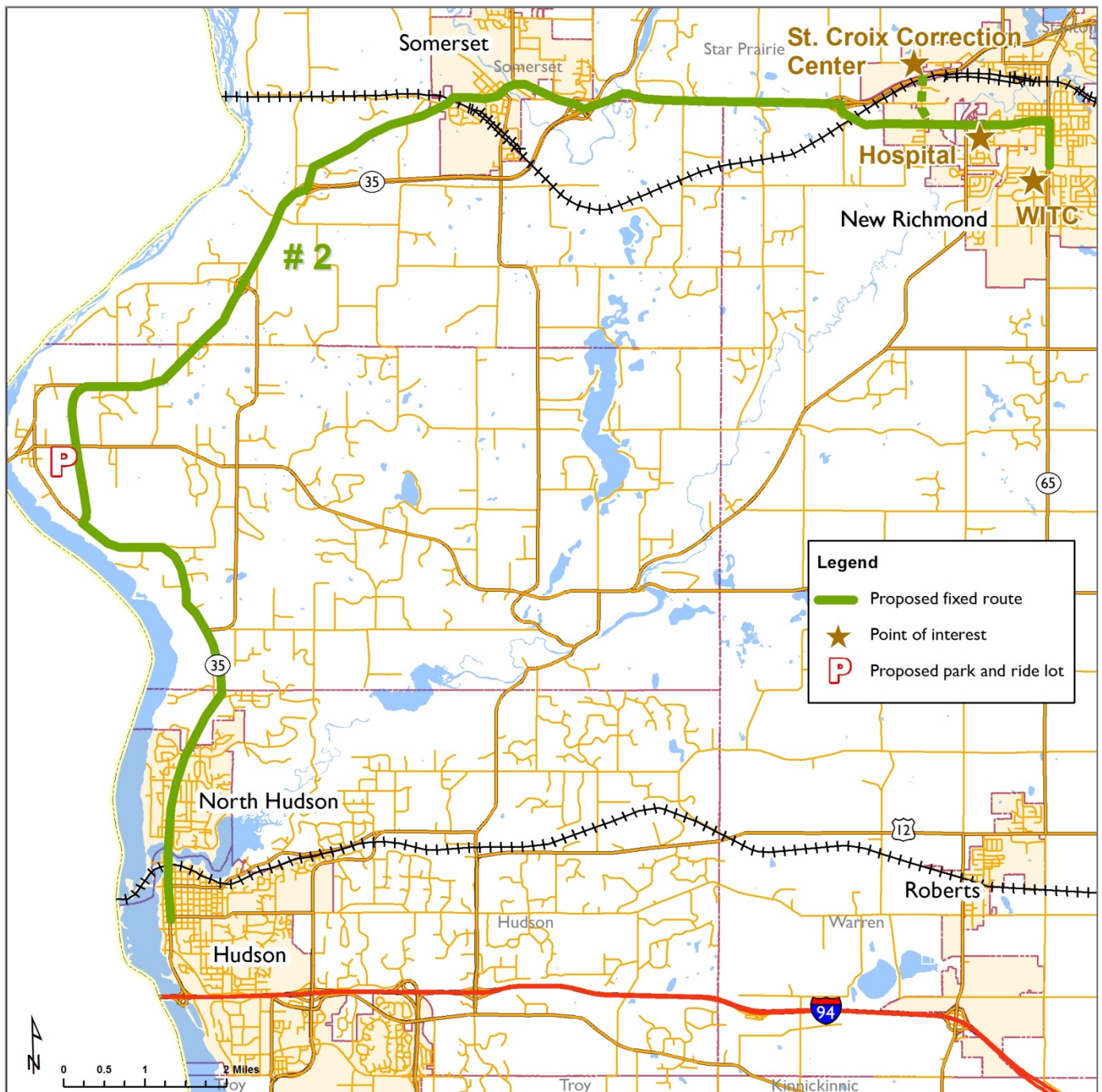


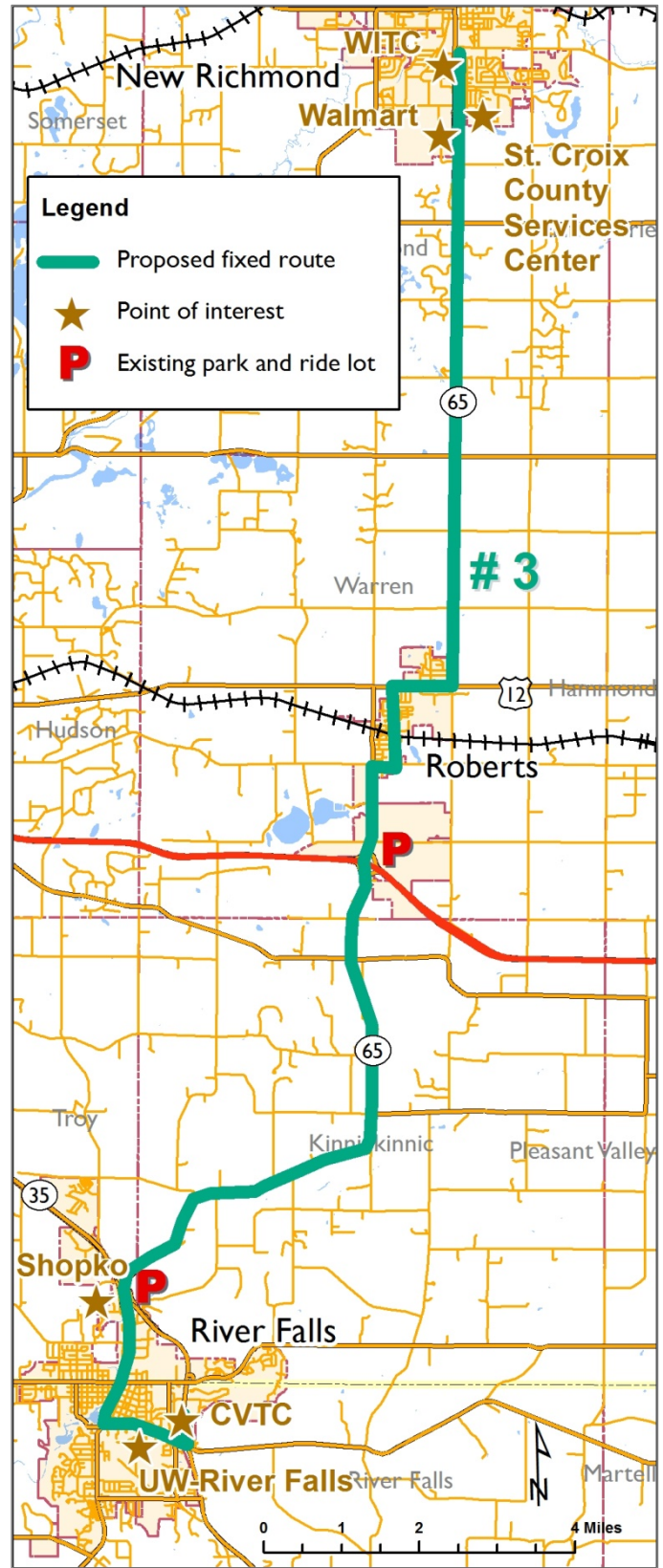
Exhibit 23: Proposed Fixed Route #3

Proposed Route #3

Another potential fixed route would provide service between New Richmond and River Falls. As shown in Exhibit 23, this route would serve several institutions of higher education - WITC (New Richmond), CVTC (River Falls), and UW-River Falls – two park and ride lots, as well as the Village of Roberts. The Census work trip figures show markedly fewer work trips traveling between New Richmond, Roberts, and River Falls, than were summed for the other routes. Just 415 work trips pass between these three communities, accounting for about 930 daily one way trips between work and home. UW-RF and the technical colleges are major anchors on this route, with heavy commuting in both directions. The park and ride lot at the Roberts exit on Interstate 94 can help to connect the New Richmond area to rideshare opportunities.

Assuming a 45 minute trip in each direction, and the same service hours as route #2, the operating cost estimate would also be the same, at about \$179,400 annually.

Some additional considerations for the operation of the route include the option to through-route the two 45 minute routes, 2 and 3, with two buses running in opposite directions as they travel from Hudson, through New Richmond, to River Falls, and vice versa. In any case, timing is key to encourage ridership.



Cost and funding estimates for the operation of route alternatives #1, #2, and #3 are shown in Exhibit 24. The cost estimates are at a planning level and are based on a contract cost of \$50 per service hour, a figure similar to that used by MRRPC in projections for new SMRT service. Farebox revenues are based on a very conservative return of 10% of the estimated costs. Currently, bus and shared ride taxi systems in WisDOT's category known as Tier C, receive a combination of State and Federal funds at the level of approximately 55 percent of the system's operating deficit (costs minus farebox revenues), and the remainder is considered to be local share. Local share can include any number of sources, including local tax dollars, a portion of the state funds received under **the \$85.21 County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance** program which provides counties with financial assistance to provide transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities, local business contributions, foundation or agency donations, or any other non-federal sources.

Exhibit 24: Cost projections for Routes #1, #2, and #3

Routes	Minutes Per Round Trip	Bus Cost Per Hour	Round Trips Per Day (Mon.-Fri.)	Round Trips Per Day (Sat.)	Service Hours per Week	Cost Per week	Cost Per Year	Annual Projected Fare Box Revenue (10% of total costs)	Anticipated Funding from State and Federal Sources (55% costs minus fare box revenue)	Estimated Local Match Required (total cost minus fare box revenue and State/Federal funding)
#1: Hudson-River Falls	60	\$50.00	12	10	70	\$3,500	\$182,000	\$18,200	\$90,090	\$73,710
#2: New Richmond-Hudson	90	\$50.00	8	6	69	\$3,450	\$179,400	\$17,940	\$88,803	\$72,657
#3: New Richmond-River Falls	90	\$50.00	8	6	69	\$3,450	\$179,400	\$17,940	\$88,803	\$72,657
Total					208	\$10,400	\$540,800	\$54,080	\$267,696	\$219,024

Proposed Route #4

Route #4, along the Interstate 94 corridor into Minnesota would address a very valid need, but would require significant coordination with Metro Transit. Recent FTA-required studies conducted on behalf of Metro Transit have not prompted expansion of their network - with buses, light rail, or commuter rail - across the state line in the I-94 corridor. Recent discussions with Metropolitan Council planning staff support the position to not expand the Metro Transit system east, into Wisconsin.

Another option is to provide the service under the jurisdiction of St. Croix County. That is not without complication, as Wisconsin State Statute restricts service provision outside of the county to jurisdictions that financially contribute to the service (**§ 59.59(2)(j)2.**). Also, statutes state that the service would be able to extend "into adjacent or suburban territory within the state lying outside of the county not more than 30 miles from the nearest point marking the corporate limits of the county." (**§ 59.58(2)(h)2.**)

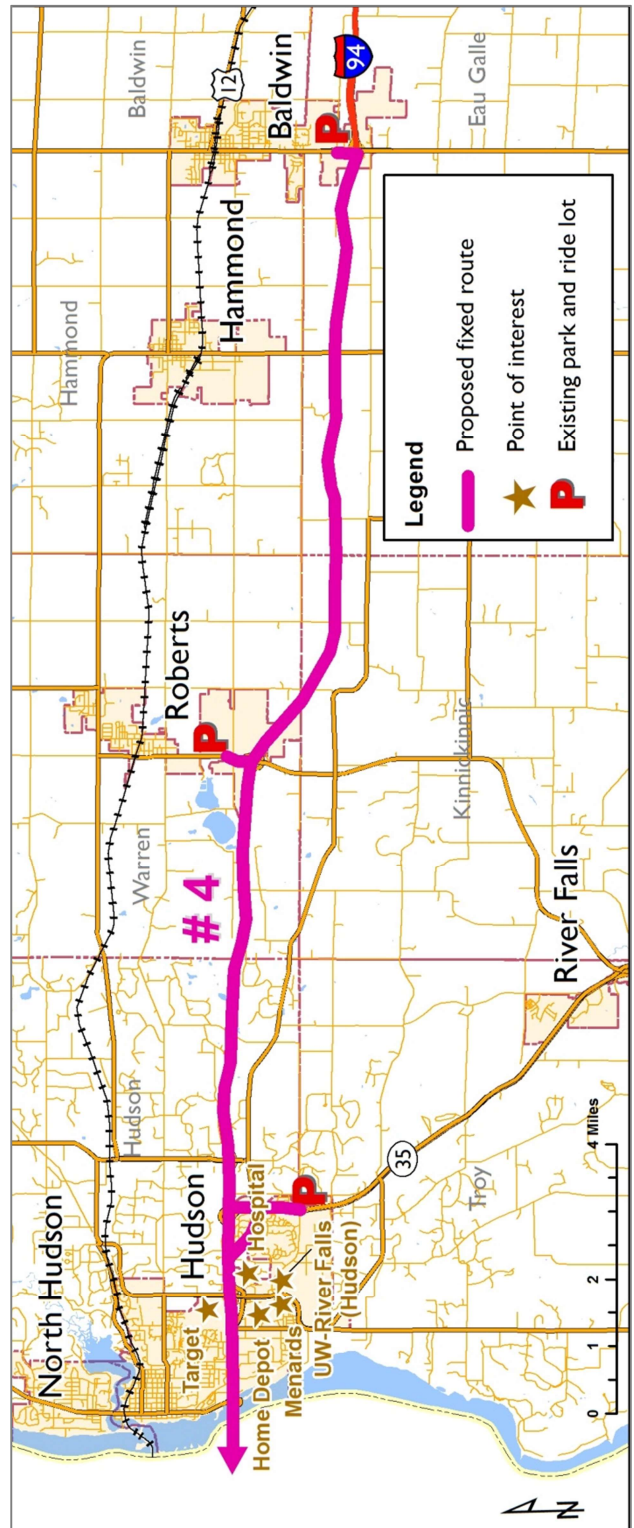
That said, there are examples where commuter services do cross the Wisconsin state line, such as Western Kenosha County Transit's service, discussed earlier, which connects to Metra commuter rail station (Chicago area) at their Antioch, Illinois station, less than 5 miles across the state line. Discussions with WisDOT Transit Section personnel suggested that such exceptions to the state statutes are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. However, in order for a commuter route from St. Croix County into Minnesota to be most useful and acceptably productive, it would need to provide

Exhibit 25: Proposed Fixed Route #4

fairly direct service to major employment destinations, likely including downtown St. Paul. This would be considerably farther into the neighboring state than the Western Kenosha County service to Antioch, Illinois, and it would delve deeply into Metro Transit's service area.

There could also be a purely private venture to provide commuter bus service to the Twin Cities, however, it is questionable whether a profit could be recognized to maintain a reliable, coordinated, and affordable private sector venture without subsidy. In times of severe worker shortage, employers have been known to invest in transit services to entice workers from more distant areas, but in this case, they would need to recognize a need that could not be filled by those who can already get to their location. St. Croix County residents are, for the most part, living in St. Croix County by choice, aware that a commute is necessary to get to their jobsite, rather than a situation where enticement is needed.

If a route were to be established, in any form, service coordination would be critical. The route would rely largely on park and ride lots in the I-94 corridor to connect with commuters. In order for commuters to make the park and ride lot connection with another of the fixed route buses, schedules would need to be well-timed to allow for convenient transfers both to and from the Twin Cities commuter bus. Without a fairly seamless connection at the Roberts and Hudson park and ride lots, this type of trip would not be a viable option for most riders without a car. With the fairly long headways, one hour to one and one half hours, proposed for the other three routes, wait times could deter transfers. Even those who would drive to the park and ride lots to make the connection would demand a very reliable service to draw them from using their cars for their entire trip. Another alternative for service in this corridor is presented later in the passenger rail discussion.



Shared Ride Taxi Service

Shared-ride taxi, a demand response service, is used in areas where origins and destinations are widely scattered, or where ridership is too low to justify fixed route service, such as in smaller communities (e.g. River Falls, New Richmond). Shared-ride taxi service is most commonly characterized by a high level of service, curb-to-curb or door-to-door, but, as the name implies, it seeks to improve efficiency through transporting more than one rider when possible.

In the case of St. Croix County, shared ride taxi services could be used in the areas that would not be served by fixed route service and/or as a feeder service to the fixed routes. Typically, ridership on shared ride taxi services is heavily weighted toward the elderly and persons with disabilities. This is the case with the Ozaukee County Shared-Ride Taxi program where about 70 percent of the approximately 112,000 trips per year are taken by those demographic groups, yet the largest category of trip purpose is work, approximately 40 percent of trips. Should St. Croix County decide to implement a shared-ride service, the Ozaukee County service is a reasonably good model, with a similar population and blend of urban and rural areas and close ties to a larger urban area (Milwaukee). The area of Ozaukee County is, however, about half that of St. Croix County, implying a higher population density and likely shorter trips.

Because of the potential for large variation in trip length in a shared-ride taxi service, fares are usually based on trip length, either through a mileage basis or by zone. For instance, Ozaukee County's fare structure is based on zones, with a base adult fare within one zone at \$3.00 (less for Senior/Disabled or Youth/Student fares); travel in two zones at \$4.00; three zones at \$5.50; four or more zones at \$6.75. (See Exhibit 26.) Trips should be arranged in advance, with any special needs communicated at the time the trip reservation is made. A possible zone structure for St. Croix County is shown in Exhibit 27.

Exhibit 26: Sample SRT Fare Structure

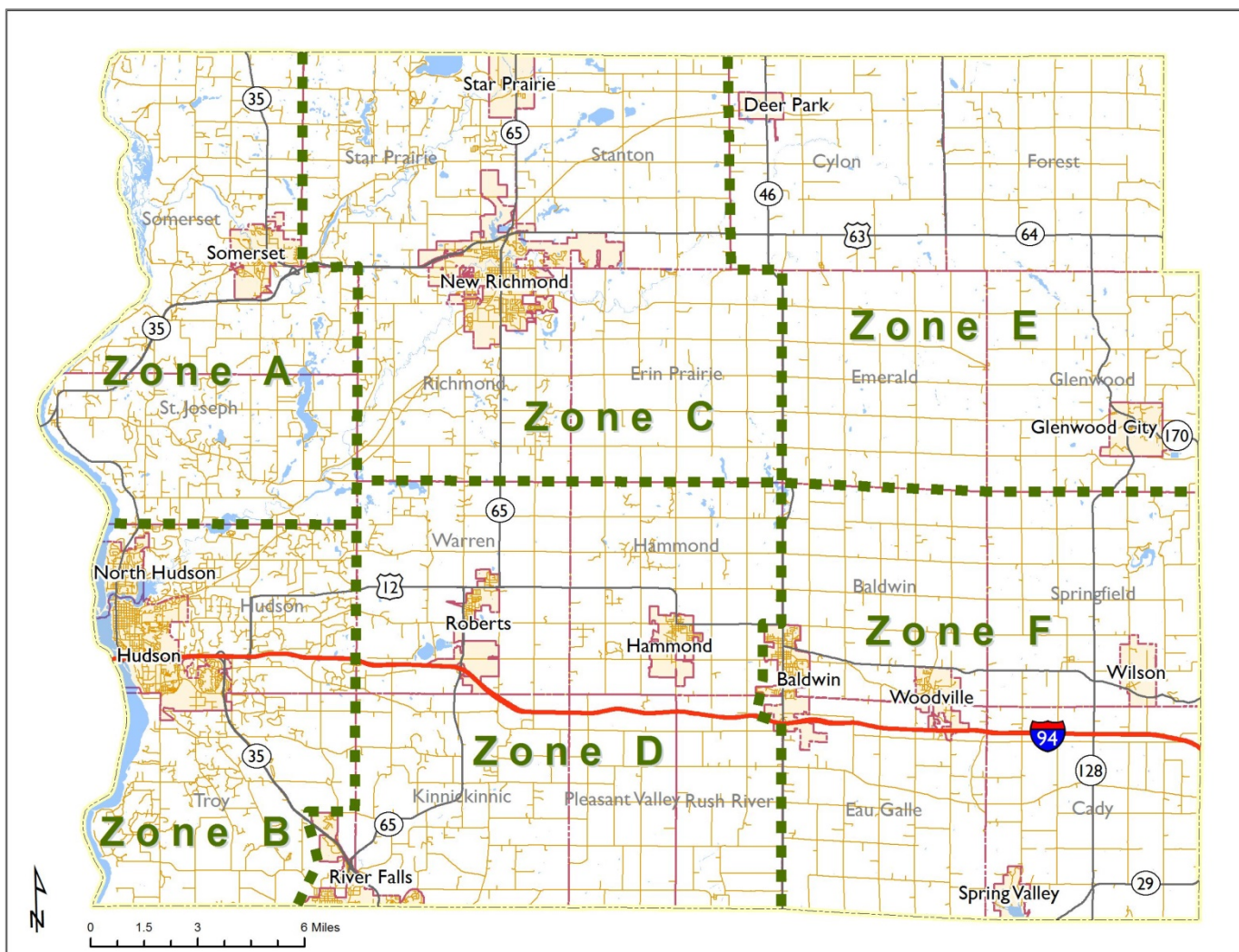
No. of Zones	Fare Categories		
	Full Adult	Youth/Student	Elderly/Disabled
1	\$3.00	\$2.75	\$2.50
2	\$4.00	\$3.75	\$3.50
3	\$5.50	\$4.75	\$4.25
4+	\$6.75	\$6.00	\$5.50

source: Ozaukee County SRT, 2016.

The per trip cost of providing shared-ride taxi service is considerably higher than fixed route service, primarily due to the higher level of service and the lower number of riders per vehicle hour, typically about two riders per vehicle hour. Contracted costs for shared ride services vary significantly, but a range of \$20 per service hour to \$32 per service hour is reasonable. Variations depend on trip volume, vehicle ownership arrangements, number of vehicles, and trip lengths as longer trips tend to mean fewer riders per hour. A program operating ten vehicles for 12 hours per day, and ten hours on Saturday, and assuming a \$30/service hour, would cost an estimated \$1,092,000 per year.

Shared-ride passenger revenues are a bit difficult to project due to possible complexity of the fare structure and the uncertainty of ridership by fare category. Also, with relatively higher fares and fewer passengers per hour than a fixed route endeavor, minor changes in assumptions used in the projection methodology can yield wide ranging projections. For instance, with the same zonal trip length assumptions, with an average of a 2 zone fare, and a fare category ratio of elderly/disabled to full adult fares of 70:30, the change in ridership from 1.25 to 2.0 trips per hour would yield revenues projections ranging from \$182,000 to \$273,000, a difference of 50 percent. In short, it needs to be understood that there are many variables involved and a fairly small number of trips, making these projections quite sensitive to the selected assumptions.

Exhibit 27: Shared Ride Taxi Zones



Volunteer Driver Programs

Volunteer driver programs are usually the least costly of transportation services, as drivers volunteer their time, use their own vehicles, and are reimbursed a set rate per mile. In the case of longer trips that require waiting for the client's return trip, there is often a payment for the wait time and potentially for meals. The challenge with volunteer driver systems is in recruiting and maintaining an adequate and stable pool of drivers. This type of service is commonly used to meet the needs that fall outside the parameters of other available services, perhaps to transport individuals across political boundaries, county or state lines, for medical appointments, or to church on Sunday. Since drivers are volunteers and using their own vehicles, they are generally limited to providing rides to ambulatory passengers. The County's ADRC currently operates a volunteer driver program for County residents' medical trips in west central Wisconsin and the Twin Cities, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Center for Independent Living's New Freedom Program offers volunteer driver services on a broader basis, including operating 24 hours per day for any trip purpose. Volunteer driver programs typically have a recommended two or more day reservation policy to facilitate the engagement of a driver for the trip.

Rideshare and Vanpool

Rideshare and vanpool programs have experienced major improvements through technology over the past 10 to 20 years. While there is still some use of ‘rideboards’, rideshare programs more commonly utilize computer programs to match riders based on origin, destination, travel time, and other factors, and provide a means to make contacts. Several options are available for continued and augmented use of the existing Metro Transit Ridematch program, currently available in St. Croix County. It is possible that Ridematch could be promoted throughout the County to make commuters more aware of the online matching service and its potential to reduce auto trips into the Twin Cities and provide a travel option for those wishing to reduce their travel costs, use their time more efficiently, or for those without an available vehicle. The effectiveness of the program relies on people registering and creating an account, making themselves available as a participant in order to make connections with other potential carpoolers easier.

A large enough number of trips with very similar origins and destinations, often to a single workplace, can utilize vanpool programs. These are usually available through state departments of transportation, or larger metropolitan transit authorities, such as the Metro Transit’s Vanpool program in the Twin Cities area. Carpool and vanpool programs often include incentives such as reduced-cost or preferential parking, or financial sponsorship by employers. Metro Vanpool is a regional program, subsidized by the Metropolitan Council, to help meet the commuting needs of commuters that reside or work in the seven-county metropolitan area. Vanpools have five to 15 people sharing the ride to and from work an average of three or more days a week. Each van has a volunteer driver and back-up driver(s). Vanpools that start outside the seven-county metropolitan area, such as any from St. Croix County, receive a 50 percent subsidy on the van lease. Participants contribute to the cost of service dependent on a number of factors such as the length of the trip, number of participants, etc. Currently, participants’ costs average \$110 per month, with drivers exempt from paying along with receiving other incentives to act as primary or back-up driver.

Park and Ride Lots

Park and Ride lots might not be readily considered a ‘service’, but are very helpful in facilitating the coordination and linking of trips within and between all of the categories listed above. Well-located and adequately sized park and ride lots can contribute to the success of a transit system by providing a place to make rideshare connections, or to be dropped off or park a vehicle and board a transit bus for a trip to work or a university campus. Park and Ride lots that are served by transit routes should be considered for shelters, benches, transit information kiosks, etc., in order to encourage and support their use as a connection point for transit services.

WisDOT has provided a number of park and ride lots, as noted earlier in this report, and continues to monitor and provide additional lots and space where possible. Encouraging rideshare programs and transit connections may increase demand on spaces in existing park and ride lots. Continued monitoring of lot use and capacity is key to providing safe and efficient transportation connections.

Passenger Rail

As mentioned earlier in this report, intercity passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Eau Claire is being pursued by the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition. The Coalition has formed an Organizing Council primarily made up of business persons in the corridor, to work with the Union Pacific Railroad, private operators, and potential investors to determine the viability of a public-

private partnership, or fully-private model to provide approximately four round trips daily with 4-6 stops along the route, including at least one stop in St. Croix County. If the determination is made to move ahead with the project, it could potentially be in operation within five years. There is reason to believe that this endeavor will be successful, however, as it is in very early stages and there is not yet any certainty of this passenger rail service coming to fruition, it is addressed in this study as a future potential transit mode with a suggestion of how it would affect the other modes being discussed. Further study would be required to make adjustments to any other modes when passenger rail approaches implementation.

The eventual establishment of passenger rail service would necessitate some restructuring of the proposed fixed route bus routes, along with some likely activity in establishing stations, associated amenities, and parking facilities. Fixed routes would need to focus on providing feeder service between the one or two rail stations in St. Croix County and the County's key destinations that are addressed in the proposed fixed routes. Timely connections with passenger departure and arrival times is critical, with adequate layover time to accommodate arriving rail passengers as well as those disembarking from the trains wishing to transfer to the fixed route bus to reach their final destination. Coordination of fare systems, schedules, and passenger amenities would make for a very attractive transit system.

Passenger rail service would likely negate the need for fixed route #4, as the rail service is being modeled to provide four round trips per day between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities, with some potential for two additional shorter runs between St. Croix County and the Twin Cities.

Governance/Management Alternatives

As described in **Wisconsin State Statute 59.58(2)**, a county could choose to establish a "Transit Commission" charged with the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a comprehensive unified local transportation system, chiefly for the transportation of persons or freight, or to contract with a private organization for these services. Detail concerning the designation of a transit commission can be found in the aforementioned section, including board make-up, member terms, etc., as well as the ability to form a joint transit commission in cooperation with any municipality, county, or federally recognized Indian tribe or band under **s. 66.0301 Intergovernmental Cooperation**. The establishment of a St. Croix County Transit Commission would demonstrate a dedication to providing and maintaining a strong transit system, and provide the focus needed to respond to the new demands of establishing, monitoring, and reacting to the challenges of the new transit system.

St. Croix County could essentially provide the same services and be eligible for the same funding from state and federal sources without forming a formal transit commission. In this case, the County would be the applicant and recipient of the federal and state funds and likely, as under the transit commission option, contract with a service provider. The County Board could choose to delegate the responsibilities of the system to a new or existing committee, or retain them at a board level. The concern with this model is that onus for the new and fairly complex administration of the transit system would fall on an entity that already has multiple demanding duties, making the needed focus on the new system difficult.

Many decisions would need to be made in the establishment and upkeep of the transit system. Staffing would be critical. The system would likely need a transit manager, and at least one support

staff member. A decision on whether those jobs should be filled as County staff positions or be included in a management or management/service operations contract would need to be made. Working with WisDOT to finalize the classification of the service and executing applications and contracts for the appropriate funding, applying for capital funding and acquiring vehicles, putting infrastructure in place, determining responsibility for vehicle and infrastructure maintenance, contracting with a service provider, and marketing the system are just a few of the tasks to be accomplished before the service even hits the road. The ongoing monitoring of ridership, stops, contracts, grants, and the knowledge of how and when to make adjustments to services, also requires some specific expertise and devoted time.

Capital Alternatives

Vehicles

If the County should decide to provide fixed route service, there are a few options available for the type of vehicles and the means of making them available for service. The County could decide to purchase the vehicles through a federal grant program or with local funds. The vehicles could then be leased to the service provider, if one is contracted. Under this scenario, the responsibility for maintenance and upkeep can be handled by either party, to be specified in the contract. Another option is for the service provider to supply their own vehicles to provide the service, with appropriate adjustments in contract costs.

The appropriate vehicle type and size chosen should be based on the daily peak passenger load anticipated, life expectancy, fuel type, and budget. Three vehicles would be needed to run routes 1, 2, and 3, as suggested. At least one backup vehicle would be needed in case of a breakdown or maintenance issue. It is important to remember that it commonly takes about 18 months from the time of order, for a new bus to be delivered and ready for service. For example, a bus that is funded and ordered midyear 2017 would not be available for service until late 2018 or early 2019. It is possible to temporarily fill the gap by purchasing used buses from other transit systems. Such used buses will be past their projected usable life, and can have some maintenance issues, but it is an option to be considered if full implementation of the fixed route system is desired within a year or two. The actual time to acquire a bus could actually be longer due to the competitive nature of the federal capital grant program, known as **Section 5339– Bus and Bus Facilities Program**. Currently, the State receives an annual allocation of Section 5339 funds for the systems throughout the state, which does not come close to meeting all the capital needs. WisDOT prioritizes the use of these funds, with replacement vehicles receiving top priority, and new (non-replacement) vehicles next, and other capital needs, such as bus maintenance facilities and transfer centers, after vehicles. In recent years, the annual allocation has not even covered the first priority level for replacement vehicle needs across the state. The State can apply, under a discretionary program, for additional capital funds, however, this has not helped the situation very much in recent years. It is hard to say, at this point, if this program will receive additional funding at the federal level, or how fortunate the State will be in competing for the discretionary program dollars. As noted, used vehicles are an option, however, with the shortage of funding for new vehicles, most transit systems are running their vehicles well beyond their useful life, making good used vehicles harder to find. The situation is not completely hopeless, but it should be understood that there is stiff competition for federal capital funds. St. Croix County would need to work with WisDOT to arrive at the best possible alternative.

Most transit buses run on diesel fuel, however, small buses are commonly available with gas engines, and alternative fueled vehicles, such as compressed natural gas (CNG) and hybrid electric

vehicles are also available. Alternative fuel vehicles usually have a higher price tag, which should be weighed against savings in fuel costs and local environmental values. Some, such as CNG vehicles, require special refueling facilities which can add additional capital needs and costs, likely prohibitive for a small system.

The vehicle size can vary from a small bus, with a capacity for about 10-12 seated passengers and 2 wheelchair tie-down positions, to a large heavy duty 30 to 45 foot transit bus, with a capacity of 30 seated passengers and 2 wheelchair tie-down positions. New small buses are approximately \$70,000 to \$80,000 each, and have a minimum useful life of 5 years. New 30 to 40 foot, heavy duty buses are approximately \$380,000 each and have a minimum useful life of 12 years. Electric hybrid versions of the heavy duty bus have a cost closer to \$500,000 to \$600,000 each. The cost of used vehicles varies widely depending on age, condition, and odometer reading.

Maintenance/Storage Facility

In order to maintain the reliable system that is critical to building and maintaining ridership, buses need to be kept clean and in good working order. Shop facilities and a mechanic that is available and able to do routine maintenance, as well as emergency repairs on the fleet, as a high priority job, are necessary to build trust of the riding public. These facilities and personnel can be contracted through another county department or the private sector, but must be able to respond quickly to fleet needs. Another option would be a combination using the highway department for routine maintenance and minor mechanical problems, and a private mechanic for more major repairs or as backup when the highway department is too busy. It is recommended that this issue is addressed by the transit commission, as soon as possible, so that the active fleet can be on the road and the system is seen as safe and reliable.

Stops and Shelters

With the cold winter weather and summer sun conditions in Wisconsin, bus shelters are nearly a necessity and should be located at major pick-up locations, at locations that typically serve more elderly or disabled riders, and particularly are park and ride lots. Many of these locations are obvious, but boarding counts and driver input will undoubtedly suggest locations in need of shelters as the system develops and grows. Shelters should be scaled to address the needs of the particular location, and need to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The cost of a basic shelter ranges from \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending upon size and model type.

Bus stop signs are useful in identifying safe locations for passenger boarding and alighting, as well as making people aware that the system exists. Once routes are comfortably established and there is an identifiable brand in place, route signs, with route and system identification, are recommended. It is still possible for drivers to stop at other safe locations, if a designated stop is not convenient for a passenger. Some systems allow passengers to flag down a bus at any intersection within an urban setting, but driver discretion is important to ensure the safety of all riders, as well as drivers. Some systems require riders to notify the transit operator, in advance, if they want to be picked up at an undesignated stop. This is most likely to be the case in rural areas, or at those stops that are considered route deviations, where a bus only goes when requested.

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Implementation Options

The following recommendations for transit services in St. Croix County are the result of demographic, trip, peer analyses, and public input opportunities included in this study. The recommendations are intended to serve as a tool for the County to institute transit services to address the needs of the general public. This section will make recommendations for services which will provide the most benefit to the traveling public; a means of providing that service, including funding and administration; and a suggested timetable for implementation. The County will need to determine the final direction through the assignment of the authority and responsibility to an individual or group to take the process forward and, ultimately, through the budget process, approving the application and receipt of funding and committing to any local funding, as needed.

Prior to implementing services, it is important that decisions are made concerning the governance and administration of the services. These are discussed below. Once the governance and administrative issues are addressed, some service recommendations could be implemented in the short term, or as quickly as the County can acquire needed capital, funding, and service agreements to operate. Other services would either take more time to establish, or could be started later based on the performance of earlier phases. Once a service is in place, it needs to be run in a consistent and dependable manner, with any changes or adjustments made only after serious consideration and clear two-way communication with the public. The service must win and retain riders with convenient and dependable operation.

Governance/Administrative Recommendations

It is recommended that the County establish a transit commission under §59.58(2) of Wisconsin State Statutes. Assistance in this process can be garnered from the Transit and Local Roads Section at WisDOT's Central Office, in Madison. The St. Croix County Transit Commission would consist of at least 7 members, appointed by the Board. The County, along with the cities of New Richmond and River Falls, may by contract establish a joint municipal commission under §66.0301, to combine the services within those municipalities with the County's services. In either case, coordination between services is critical. As noted in §59.58(2)(h), "The jurisdiction, powers and duties of the commission shall extend to the comprehensive unified local transportation system for which the commission is established including any portion of such system extending into adjacent or suburban territory within this state lying outside of the county not more than 30 miles from the nearest point marking the corporate limits of the county." It is further stated in the Statutes that service cannot be provided outside of the corporate limits of the county unless the county receives financial support for the service.

The Board also needs to determine staffing of the Commission. It is recommended that a Transit Manager and a support staff person be considered. The Transit Manager would be responsible for monitoring and reporting to the Transit Commission and WisDOT on the system's operation and performance, budgeting, compiling grant applications, developing requests for proposals for the provision of service, reacting to public comments, and other tasks as formalized in a position description.

Service Recommendations

It is the recommendation of this plan that the County enter into a contract, or contracts, with reputable and experienced provider of transit services. This should be done through an RFP process, with cost as only one of the selection criteria, as the quality of the service is at least as important to the success of the system as cost. The RFP process should occur once a fairly firm model of the desired services is in place and can be clearly presented in the RFP. Examples of RFPs from other systems can be obtained through a WisDOT contact.

The general service recommendations resulting from this planning process are for both fixed route and shared ride taxi services, as presented in the previous chapter, with Routes #1, #2, and #3 implemented first, and work to continue on the establishment of Route #4, in light of bi-state complications. To assist in the commuting traffic between the County and Minnesota worksites, in the short term, a promotional push of the Metro Transit Ridematch and vanpool programs is suggested. It is also recommended that the St. Croix County Transit Commission become aware and involved in the efforts of the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition to establish passenger rail services between Eau Claire and St. Paul through a public-private partnership model. Four round trips, plus a possible two daily short-run trips between St. Croix County and St. Paul, are under consideration. The Coalition is in discussions with the Union-Pacific Railroad, and should have a better view of future service potential in the Fall of 2017. An implementation horizon for the service is could be approximately three years.

Shared ride taxi service is recommended for the remainder of the County, as the smaller municipalities and rural areas have a more dispersed trip pattern and do not warrant fixed route service. The shared ride taxi service, however, should be implemented with close and on-going coordination with the fixed routes. This demand responsive service could possibly be contracted with the same service provider as the fixed route service, though the services should be monitored and accounted for independently, as required by WisDOT and FTA and to provide valid data for local decision-making. (The appropriate grant programs would need to be determined by WisDOT, upon examination of the intended services.)

Capital Recommendations

In terms of buses, this study would recommend the use of vehicles designed to carry not more than 15 persons (including the driver). This is suggested both as a capacity need and as an operating cost saving measure. Vehicles that are designed to carry 16 or more persons (including the driver) and are driven on public highways are required by federal motor carrier regulations to be driven only by drivers in possession of a Commercial Vehicle Drivers' License. While there is certainly nothing wrong with employing CDL drivers, it can increase the challenge to find drivers, as well as increase the operating costs.

The fixed route buses should be ADA accessible, include bicycle carriers, and ultimately be equipped with Wi-Fi for passenger use. Vehicles can be purchased by the County and leased to the service provider. If this is the desired path, it is recommended that the County look for used vehicles for the short term and to start applying for federal funding for new vehicles through WisDOT as soon as possible and at every opportunity. It is possible to ask for the service provider to supply vehicles at the start of the service, perhaps with a predetermined goal of County ownership of at least a portion

of the fleet within three to five years, as the County is able to garner grant funding to acquire the vehicles. This could be the case for both fixed route vehicles, and for shared-ride taxi vehicles. Shared-ride taxi vehicles are typically of the minivan variety and it is recommended that at least half of the shared ride taxi vehicles are ADA accessible at the start of service.

A storage and/or maintenance facility will be needed for the vehicles, whether they are owned by the County or a contracted service provider. If space is available, this could be in an existing County Highway facility, or in additional space owned or leased by the County. Maintenance could be executed by existing County staff, adding staff if necessary, or contracted to a private company. It is critical that vehicles are kept clean and in good repair at all times, to encourage and keep riders.

Shelters can be added as ridership patterns show where the busier pick-up locations occur. The most likely locations for shelters are at park and ride lots. Major employers, schools, and apartment complexes are also likely candidates. It is possible that businesses, local organizations, or institutions may be willing to participate in the placement of shelters, however, it is critical that shelters meet ADA standard so that they can be used by all riders. Shelters can also serve to brand your transit system, displaying logos, schedules, cell phone application information, etc. Bicycle racks may also be desired at park and ride lots and other key locations. If bicycle share programs are instituted in any of the communities served by the fixed routes, colocation of bus stops and bicycle terminals are recommended.

Action Plan

If there is a determination that St. Croix County would like to proceed with the development of a transit system like, or similar to, those discussed above, Exhibit 28 displays a suggested action plan to assist in that effort by addressing approximate timing and responsibilities for significant milestones in the setup process. In Exhibit 28, those actions noted as 'immediate' are really those that could begin at any time, but are needed to occur prior to other activities. 'Short-term' activities are those that should be taken on early in the process, likely within the first six months to a year, depending upon the anticipated schedule for instituting the services. In many cases, action items can, and sometimes should, be taken on concurrently. The desired kick-off date and the availability of grant funding will likely determine the timing of those items listed as 'mid-term'. The 'long-term' items are those that could wait until after service in place. 'On-going' activities note just a few of the things that need to be attended to on a regular basis, as service is provided.

It should be noted that this plan recommends that private or public-private ventures be considered whenever such options are available, with careful consideration to a proposed service's ability to meet the needs of the riders with effective, affordable, dependable, and sustainable services. It is unlikely that most of the services, with the possible exception of a commuter service into the Twin Cities Metro area, could be accomplished without some government (tax payer) assistance. This is the case with very nearly all transportation services nationwide, including air travel, most rail travel, and certainly highway travel. User fees, through gas taxes, vehicle registration fees, and other miscellaneous techniques such as 'wheel tax', dedicated vehicle sales taxes, or tolls, etc., do generally serve to charge those people that are using the highways, 'users', for their construction and maintenance, however, these 'user fees' cover only about half of the highway construction and maintenance costs, 43.6 percent in Wisconsin, with the remaining funding coming from general purpose taxes (property taxes, sales taxes, etc.). (Source: "Gasoline Taxes and User Fees Pay for Only Half of State & Local Road Spending", Joseph Henchman, Tax Foundation, January 3, 2014.)

Exhibit 28: Action Plan for Establishment of Transit Services

Action	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Plan completion	immediately	Transportation Committee/County Board
Begin discussions with WisDOT	immediately	Transit Subcommittee/Transportation Committee
Market Rideshare and Vanpool services (working with Metro Transit)	immediately	Transit Subcommittee/Metro Transit
Establish governing and administrative structure (Transit Commission/staff/physical location/capital ownership/maintenance/fare systems, etc.)	short term	Transit Subcommittee/County Board
Hire or assign duties to Transit Manager or contract with an interim manager to assist with setup (as determined)	short term	Transit Commission/County Board
Meet with existing service providers to determine coordination needs/desires	short term	River Falls/New Richmond/ADRC/Commission
Estimate budget for 1st year (operating and capital)	short term	Commission/Committee/County Board
Work with WisDOT on federal/state grant application	short term	Commission/Transit Manager
Seek out vehicles (used or new, as needed)	short term	Commission/Transit Manager
Determine service specs and write RFP(s)	mid-term	Transit Manager/Commission/County Board
Issue RFP(s) for provision of service	mid-term	Commission/Transit Manager
Conduct selection process	mid-term	Selection Committee
Meet with top provider to negotiate contract, establish service and administrative details	mid-term	Commission/Transit Manager
Approve contract	mid-term	County Board
Meet with cities & major generators to locate major stops	mid-term	Commission/Transit Manager
Market services	mid-term	Commission/Transit Manager/Service Provider
Launch services	mid-term	Transit Manager/Service Provider
Continue marketing efforts	ongoing	Commission/Transit Manager/Service Provider
Monitor service performance	ongoing	Commission/Transit Manager/Service Provider
Determine need for shelters/signage/fare delivery options/other capital needs	long-term	Transit Manager/Commission
Apply for capital grant (for determined needs)	long-term	Transit Manager/County Board
Apply for vehicle replacement grants as needed	ongoing	Transit Manager/Commission/County Board
Monitor service needs and fluctuations	ongoing	Transit Manager/Commission

If the County is not yet ready to proceed with establishing the suggested transit services, there are a number of actions and considerations that could occur either before or instead of the aforementioned action items. The following sections describe some actions that could be taken on by the County, either prior to or in place of, the previously outlined transit services.

Phasing

While a full implementation of the proposed services would be the best way to incur the benefits of a fully integrated system, the County may determine a need to phase in services, or build on the existing services to lay stepping stones toward a fully-functioning system.

Phase 1

It is suggested that first phases undertaken should be impactful, an example of what transit services can achieve for the County. In that light, it is suggested that two areas could address some of the large and visible needs. The largest need, in term of numbers, is the commute between St. Croix County and the Twin Cities. It may very well also be the most complex need to address. It is recommended that the Transit Subcommittee pursue advertisement and promotion of the Metro Transit Ridematch and Vanpool programs, while continuing to work with Metro Transit toward the operation of commuter services between St. Croix County and St. Paul.

A more visible service that could also be a part of Phase 1 is Fixed Route #1, between Hudson and River Falls, serving park and ride lots, and numerous destinations in the corridor. While it may be challenging and somewhat less cost effective to implement only one of the routes versus all three within the County, Route #1 has the strongest potential for success and has the highest visibility of the three routes. The challenge may come in finding a provider for the limited service. Some economies of scale, encouraging private contractor interest, could be found in the formation of a joint Transit Commission with the County, and the cities of New Richmond and River Falls, with the intention of expanding to the larger fixed route system in the future (to include New Richmond), while coordinating or unifying the service contracts in Phase 1. The service needs to portray dependability and permanence through the establishment of a brand, bus shelters at key stops, a stable and reliable schedule, clean vehicles, and well-trained and courteous drivers.

It is important to remember that Fixed Route #1 cannot reach its full potential without the other routes. In most fixed route systems, riders rely on transfers between routes to complete their trip. The proposed routes, here, would likely have fewer inter-route transfers than an urban fixed route system, but some transferring, either from another fixed route or from shared-ride taxi service, would still be expected. A single route would only serve those passengers not requiring a transfer to or from the other areas that are not yet served.

Phase 2

Given a productive operation of Route #1, in Phase 1, there will likely be public call for the establishment of fixed routes #2 and #3. These two routes should be established together, joining Route #1. The routes will need to be well coordinated to allow for transfers between routes and convenient time points that serve riders to major destinations. If riders cannot arrive at their destinations when needed, ridership will suffer dearly. The ability and expectation to expand the services provided by a service contractor should be addressed in the original contract, under Phase 1, so that Phase 2 can be executed, preferably a year after the first phase.

Phase 3

The expansion of shared-ride taxi service to the general public, county-wide, could be established under a Phase 3, if it is necessary to have such a delay. Current services for Elderly and Disabled riders in the County, provided by ADRC, would stay in place through the earlier phases, and transform into a service that is clearly intended for all riders, rebranded and marketed as a general public shared-ride taxi service. This would most likely become a privately contracted service, similar to the fixed routes, at such a time that it becomes a service for the general public. As such, it is critical that it continue to be an accessible service as much of the ridership will continue to be the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Coordination

As identified early in this document, there is a large number of vehicles providing transportation services throughout and beyond the limits of St. Croix County. Most of those vehicles provide defined services to a designated group of riders, often clients of the particular establishment or agency. There have been some coordination meetings in the County, with some initial discussions of the services that are provided and some cautious discussion of vehicle sharing. Vehicle sharing usually takes the form of one entity entering into an agreement with another to permit the use of a vehicle when it is not being utilized by the owner agency. This often meets with roadblocks, real or perceived, having to do with insurance, funding restrictions, driver qualifications, etc. It is likely that most of the owners of these vehicles will not be willing to coordinate in this manner, but there may be some opportunities, more often between agencies using vehicles purchased through state and federal programs that encourage vehicle sharing. All possibilities for sharing should be pursued if the sharing will improve services for existing riders and/or extend transportation services to a broader base of riders through full use of the vehicles.

Another means of coordination with the goal of improving the efficiency of services, is to share riders. There is a broad spectrum of actions to implement this type of coordination, from two transportation providing agencies coordinating to get their riders to a particular event more efficiently, to many providers utilizing central scheduling/dispatching to share and provide trips, regardless of passenger affiliation, in an optimized manner, or anything in between. On a small scale, this can be accomplished on a case-by-case basis. As an example, can an adult, living in a rural area of the county and working at a shop a block away from the local middle school, hop on a school bus to ride to work? There are certainly plenty of roadblocks that can immediately pop up to keep this from happening, but are those roadblocks real or insurmountable? This type of coordination, at any level, requires significant effort by the participating agencies to reach agreement on compatible service policies, driver requirements, real and perceived safety or insurance issues, rider eligibility standards, and more. Most importantly, the customer needs to be considered in any coordination effort, with care to not compromise too much on existing service levels, and to maintain or build on comfort levels of the most vulnerable riders.

Appendix A
Summary of Online Survey Results
St. Croix County Transit Feasibility Study
July-October, 2016

Appendix A
Online Survey Results Summary

St. Croix County Transit Feasibility Study Survey

1. What is your age?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
under 16	0.0%	0
16-17	0.5%	5
18-24	6.6%	62
25-44	38.2%	357
45-64	44.3%	414
65-74	8.4%	78
75 and older	1.9%	18
<i>answered question</i>		934
<i>skipped question</i>		0

2. How many people, including you, are there in your household?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
One (just me)	12.0%	112
Two	35.2%	329
Three	17.3%	162
Four	20.8%	194
Five	10.4%	97
Six or more	4.3%	40
<i>answered question</i>		934
<i>skipped question</i>		0

3. How many of the people in your household are under the age of 18?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	57.1%	525
One	16.3%	150
Two	17.2%	158
Three	7.3%	67
Four	2.0%	18
Five or more	0.2%	2
<i>answered question</i>		920
<i>skipped question</i>		14

4. How many persons in your household are 65 years or older?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	86.0%	791
One	7.8%	72
Two	5.5%	51
Three	0.3%	3
Four or more	0.3%	3
<i>answered question</i>		920
<i>skipped question</i>		14

5. What is your approximate annual household income?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
less than \$10,000	2.6%	24
\$10,000 - \$19,999	3.0%	28
\$20,000 - \$29,999	3.3%	30
\$30,000 - \$39,999	3.7%	34
\$40,000 - \$59,999	10.5%	97
\$60,000 - \$79,000	13.9%	128
\$80,000 - \$99,999	15.5%	143
\$100,000 or more	32.0%	294
I'd rather not say / I don't know	15.4%	142
<i>answered question</i>		920
<i>skipped question</i>		14

6. How many working motorized vehicles (cars, SUVs, trucks) are available to members of your household?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
One	18.6%	171
Two	44.3%	408
Three	22.6%	208
Four or more	13.2%	121
None	1.3%	12
<i>answered question</i>		920
<i>skipped question</i>		14

7. What city or village is nearest to your home?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
City of Glenwood City	1.7%	15
City of Hudson	30.5%	270
City of New Richmond	9.3%	82
City of River Falls	20.7%	183
Village of Baldwin	5.2%	46
Village of Deer Park	1.4%	12
Village of Hammond	4.1%	36
Village of North Hudson	7.7%	68
Village of Roberts	3.2%	28
Village of Somerset	3.1%	27
Village of Spring Valley	1.1%	10
Village of Star Prairie	1.9%	17
Village of Wilson	0.8%	7
Village of Woodville	2.4%	21
Other (please specify nearest city or village):	7.0%	62
<i>answered question</i>		884
<i>skipped question</i>		50

8. Think of the trip that you make most frequently in your normal daily life. What is the main purpose of the trip to your most frequent destination?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Work	76.8%	679
School	5.0%	44
Shopping	9.8%	87
Medical/Dental	2.5%	22
Social/Recreational	2.9%	26
Church/Worship service	0.9%	8
Other (please specify)	2.0%	18
<i>answered question</i>		884
<i>skipped question</i>		50

9. Which city or village is closest to your most frequent trip destination?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
City of Glenwood City	0.7%	6
City of Hudson	50.8%	449
City of New Richmond	9.7%	86
City of River Falls	14.8%	131
Village of Baldwin	3.7%	33
Village of Deer Park	0.2%	2
Village of Hammond	1.4%	12
Village of North Hudson	1.5%	13
Village of Roberts	0.1%	1
Village of Somerset	1.2%	11
Village of Spring Valley	0.3%	3
Village of Star Prairie	0.1%	1
Village of Wilson	0.0%	0
Village of Woodville	0.7%	6
Other (please specify nearest city or village)	14.7%	130
<i>answered question</i>		884
<i>skipped question</i>		50

10. How do you most often travel to this destination?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I drive myself	89.7%	793
I ride with someone else who is driving their vehicle	5.9%	52
On a transit bus or van	0.7%	6
In a taxi cab	0.7%	6
By bicycle	0.7%	6
I walk	1.1%	10
Other (please specify)	1.2%	11
<i>answered question</i>		884
<i>skipped question</i>		50

11. If there was a convenient and economical transit bus or van available for your most common trip, would you choose to travel by

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. I would use transit nearly every time I travel to my	20.3%	177
Yes. I would use the transit service at least two or	14.7%	128
Yes. I would use transit occasionally for this trip.	17.4%	152
I might consider using transit for this trip, but it's not	22.1%	193
No. I would never use a transit service for this trip.	25.5%	222
<i>answered question</i>		872
<i>skipped question</i>		62

12. If a convenient and economical transit bus or van service were available for other trips that you make, would you utilize that service?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I would use transit service often for other trips.	25.1%	220
Yes, sometimes.	25.2%	221
Maybe, occasionally.	26.0%	228
Probably not.	13.6%	119
No, I would never use a transit bus or van service.	10.3%	90
<i>answered question</i>		878
<i>skipped question</i>		56

13. For what type of trips (other than your most common destination) do you think you would use transit service if it were available? (Select all that

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Work	19.0%	146
School	9.9%	76
Shopping	56.0%	431
Medical/Dental	35.0%	269
Social/Recreational	54.7%	421
Church/Worship service	14.2%	109
Other (please specify)	8.6%	66
<i>answered question</i>		769
<i>skipped question</i>		165

14. Please select up to 5 most important reasons that you would choose to use transit bus or van service, if it were available? (Select up to 5

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
To save money	66.2%	509
To use my time more productively while traveling	42.5%	327
I don't like to drive	11.4%	88
I'm unable to drive	6.5%	50
To improve the environment	46.7%	359
To save gas	62.7%	482
To feel safer	7.3%	56
To avoid driving, biking, or walking in poor weather	34.7%	267
So that I can be more independent	9.8%	75
So that I don't need to park my car	28.7%	221
My car is not so reliable	6.2%	48
I don't have a car	8.1%	62
Other (please specify)	7.7%	59
<i>answered question</i>		769
<i>skipped question</i>		165

Appendix B
Coordination Plan Worksheet
St. Croix County Locally Developed Transportation Coordination Plan
November, 2013

TABLE 1
St. Croix County, WI
Coordination Plan Worksheet

Priority of Goal	Goal to support 5-year coordinated plan	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline/ Deadline	Roadblocks to Implementation
1	Strive to increase transportation funding to create sustainable transportation services.	Compile and maintain inventory of transportation resources and programs that fund transportation	TCC, RTCC	ongoing	time
		Pursue, where applicable, technology applications to improve financial data tracking and reporting for uniformity and consistency	TCC, RTCC	ongoing or as needed	funding
		Evaluate appropriate technology and system applications to improve and expand upon automated billing capabilities	RTCC & TCC	ongoing	funding
		Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of creating a transportation manager position to coordinate and manage countywide transportation services	TCC, County	2015-2019	funding
		Identify agency support services that can lend themselves to improving the provision of transportation services	TCC	2014	Time
		Expand participation in TCC		2014-2019	Time, Willingness to participate
		Apply for 85.21, 5310 (including New Freedom), and 5311 grants, and other appropriate funding programs to continue existing services and expand services as desired	ADRC, CILWW, Other Providers	annually	funding
2	Increase transportation options for the transportation disadvantaged.	Inventory and evaluate transportation needs of various target populations to evaluate the effectiveness of existing transportation services	ADRC, TCC and RTCC	ongoing	funding, time, cooperation
		Improve transportation service coordination throughout the region	All providers and TCC, & RTCC	ongoing	funding, time, cooperation
		Increase flexibility in client-specific programs for more efficient transportation service utilization and ease of use	All providers and TCC and RTCC	ongoing	cooperation
		Consider expansion of transportation services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities after hours and weekends	TCC & RTCC	2019	funding

Priority of Goal	Goal to support 5-year coordinated plan	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline/ Deadline	Roadblocks to Implementation
3	Develop/expand/continue transportation services.	Increase efforts to maintain updated vehicle inventories and schedules to more effectively manage the use of existing vehicles	TCC, RTCC, All providers	ongoing	Time, Willingness to participate
		Expand participation in TCC	ADRC	2014-2019	Time, Willingness to participate
		Conduct ongoing evaluation of transportation service schedules to identify duplication of services, underused assets, and service gaps, as well as tracking needs of target populations	TCC, RTCC, All providers	ongoing	Time
4	Develop and improve access to information and increase awareness of transportation services (marketing/educational outreach).	Improve TCC communication to share information with a broader network of providers and decision-makers	ADRC, TCC and RTCC	ongoing	cooperation, funding
		Continue to maintain all transportation resource information on County website	continue ADRC	ongoing	
		Support partnerships to provide a mobility management and to improve travel training and consumer education programs to expand consumer access to transportation services	TCC & RTCC	ongoing	
		Evaluate options for a consolidated payment system that supports user-friendly services	TCC, RTCC, All providers	ongoing	funding & Coordination
		Review current customer input practices to develop a standardized policy to both receive and evaluate input and respond to customer concerns and complaints in a timely fashion	TCC & RTCC	2014-2019	Time
		Pursue coordinated marketing efforts through public media sources, whenever practicable	ADRC, TCC and RTCC	ongoing	Desire to coordinate
		Expand support for transportation service coordination	All providers, TCC and RTCC	ongoing	
		Expand transportation system performance monitoring and evaluation and communicate the benefits of coordination efforts to decision makers and stakeholders	ADRC, TCC, RTCC County Administration	ongoing	political environment
		Document and distribute Medicaid statistics	Medicaid Transportation Broker, State	2014	

Priority of Goal	Goal to support 5-year coordinated plan	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline/ Deadline	Roadblocks to Implementation
5	Maximize the efficiency of transportation services through technology, innovation and coordination.	Expand participation in TCC	ADRC	2014-2019	Time, Willingness to participate
		Encourage all TCC participants to take a more active role in the TCC	ADRC	ongoing	Time, Funding
		Increase flexibility in client-specific programs for more efficient transportation service utilization	TCC & RTCC	ongoing	Time, Funding, Willingness to cooperate
		Conduct ongoing evaluation of transportation service schedules to identify duplication of services, underused assets, and service gaps, as well as tracking needs of target populations	TCC, RTCC, All providers	ongoing	Time, Funding
		Improve coordination and utilization of existing inventory of vehicles	ADRC, TCC, RTCC and all providers	2015	Time, policies, program stability
		Develop strategic plan for county-wide and region-wide transportation services	ADRC, TCC, RTCC	2014	Time
		Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of creating a centralized dispatch system for transportation services, county-wide or region-wide	RTCC & TCC	2019	Funding, willingness to cooperate, expertise & political environment
		Increase private sector involvement in improving transportation service coordination	TCC, RTCC, All providers	2014	Willingness to participate
		Centralize dispatch system to reduce duplication of trips	TCC, RTCC, All providers	2019	Funding & Willingness to participate
		Evaluate applicable technology applications to improve transportation coordination	TCC, RTCC, All providers	2019	Funding & Expertise
		Consider co-location of County human service offices to more efficiently serve client transportation needs	County	2014	

Appendix C
Work Trip Details
Origin/Destination by MCD

Appendix C Work Trip Details

Work Trips within St. Croix County

Workplace

St. Croix County																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													
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total trip dests.

230	1589	75	114	24	150	124	76	77	324	96	120	549	6653	1475	184	4016	130	55	243	4369	364	157	293	1154	106	375	101	239	68	576	290	38	753	25187
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* City of River Falls numbers include both St. Croix and Pierce County portions of River Falls.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, ACS 5-year data (2006-2010)

Work trip totals		Workplace						
			Working in St. Croix Co., outside of home MCD	Working in Dunn Co.	Working in Pierce Co.	Working in Polk Co.	Working Eau Claire Co.	Working in Minnesota
		total	Working in home MCD					
T. Baldwin		616	90	297	19	38	4	164
V. Baldwin		1742	455	668	19	54	0	542
T. Cady		401	35	138	82	45	4	93
T. Cylon		351	80	143	0	0	49	79
V. Deer Park		75	10	45	4	0	4	12
T. Eau Galle		667	100	316	15	30	8	188
T. Emerald		411	100	207	18	8	4	74
T. Erin Prairie		413	50	201	0	0	12	150
T. Forest		304	50	118	4	0	54	74
C. Glenwood City		530	175	197	39	0	22	93
T. Glenwood		364	80	173	35	0	22	50
T. Hammond		907	65	387	4	12	4	435
V. Hammond		1056	140	309	4	4	0	595
C. Hudson		6597	2135	789	29	0	20	3599
T. Hudson		4104	455	1219	0	10	55	2365
T. Kinnickinnic		952	115	407	0	12	4	410
C. New Richmond		3882	1565	859	0	0	165	1293
V. North Hudson		1952	85	690	0	0	0	1177
T. Pleasant Valley		283	55	109	4	0	0	115
T. Richmond		1617	155	759	4	4	12	683
C. River Falls		7710	3035	1395	25	340	20	2850
V. Roberts		838	85	495	0	0	0	243
T. Rush River		320	60	165	8	4	0	83
T. Somerset		2032	150	590	10	0	90	1192
V. Somerset		1305	310	183	0	12	49	747
T. Springfield		440	60	181	51	4	8	122
T. St. Joseph		1965	290	445	0	0	45	1185
T. Stanton		525	75	292	0	0	20	138
T. Star Prairie		1919	125	873	20	10	149	717
V. Star Prairie		403	30	199	0	0	44	130
T. Troy		2434	325	835	0	40	15	1219
T. Warren		915	135	329	4	0	0	439
V. Wilson		136	20	80	16	0	4	12
V. Woodville		546	155	244	28	8	4	93
total trip dests.		48,712	10,850	14,337	442	635	891	21,361

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, ACS 5-year data (2006-2010)

Work trip total percentages
Percentages

Workplace

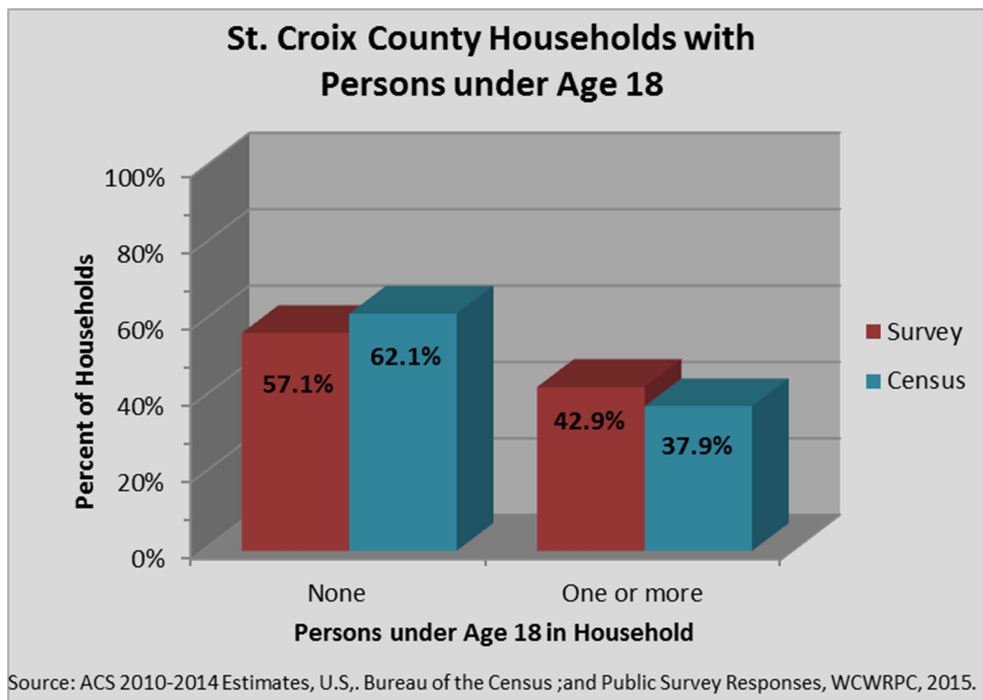
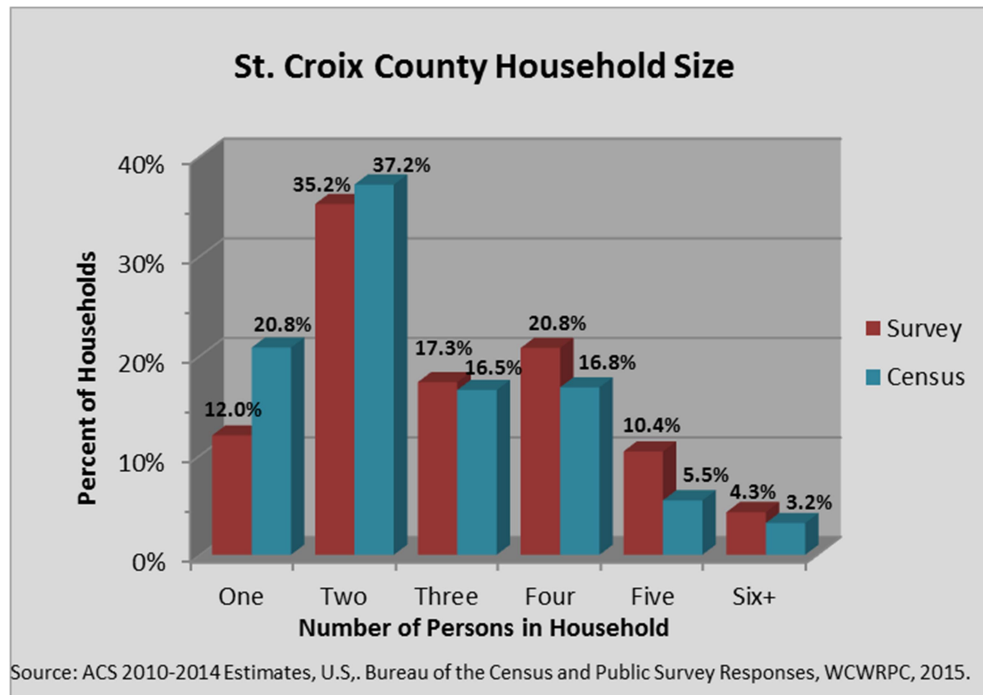
	Workplace							
	total	work w/in home MCD	Total w/in St. Crx Co., outside of home MCD	Total working w/in Dunn Co.	Total working w/in Pierce Co.	Total working w/in Polk Co.	Total working w/in Eau Claire Co.	Total working w/in Minnesota
Residence	T. Baldwin	616	14.6%	48.2%	3.1%	6.2%	0.6%	26.6%
	V. Baldwin	1742	26.1%	38.3%	1.1%	3.1%	0.0%	31.1%
	T. Cady	401	8.7%	34.4%	20.4%	11.2%	1.0%	23.2%
	T. Cylon	351	22.8%	40.7%	0.0%	0.0%	14.0%	22.5%
	V. Deer Park	75	13.3%	60.0%	5.3%	0.0%	5.3%	16.0%
	T. Eau Galle	667	15.0%	47.4%	2.2%	4.5%	1.2%	28.2%
	T. Emerald	411	24.3%	50.4%	4.4%	1.9%	1.0%	18.0%
	T. Erin Prairie	413	12.1%	48.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	36.3%
	T. Forest	304	16.4%	38.8%	1.3%	0.0%	17.8%	24.3%
	C. Glenwood City	530	33.0%	37.2%	7.4%	0.0%	4.2%	17.5%
	T. Glenwood	364	22.0%	47.5%	9.6%	0.0%	6.0%	13.7%
	T. Hammond	907	7.2%	42.7%	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	48.0%
	V. Hammond	1056	13.3%	29.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	56.3%
	C. Hudson	6597	32.4%	12.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	54.6%
	T. Hudson	4104	11.1%	29.7%	0.0%	0.2%	1.3%	57.6%
	T. Kinnickinnic	952	12.1%	42.8%	0.0%	1.3%	0.4%	43.1%
	C. New Richmond	3882	40.3%	22.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	33.3%
	V. North Hudson	1952	4.4%	35.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.3%
	T. Pleasant Valley	283	19.4%	38.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	40.6%
	T. Richmond	1617	9.6%	46.9%	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%	42.2%
	C. River Falls	7710	39.4%	18.1%	0.3%	4.4%	0.3%	37.0%
	V. Roberts	838	10.1%	59.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.0%
	T. Rush River	320	18.8%	51.6%	2.5%	1.3%	0.0%	25.9%
	T. Somerset	2032	7.4%	29.0%	0.5%	0.0%	4.4%	58.7%
	V. Somerset	1305	23.8%	14.0%	0.0%	0.9%	3.8%	57.2%
	T. Springfield	440	13.6%	41.1%	11.6%	0.9%	1.8%	27.7%
	T. St. Joseph	1965	14.8%	22.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	60.3%
	T. Stanton	525	14.3%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	26.3%
	T. Star Prairie	1919	6.5%	45.5%	1.0%	0.5%	7.8%	37.4%
	V. Star Prairie	403	7.4%	49.4%	0.0%	0.0%	10.9%	32.3%
	T. Troy	2434	13.4%	34.3%	0.0%	1.6%	0.6%	50.1%
	T. Warren	915	14.8%	36.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	48.0%
	V. Wilson	136	14.7%	58.8%	11.8%	0.0%	2.9%	8.8%
	V. Woodville	546	28.4%	44.7%	5.1%	1.5%	0.7%	17.0%

total trip dests.	48712	22.3%	29.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.8%	0.4%	43.9%
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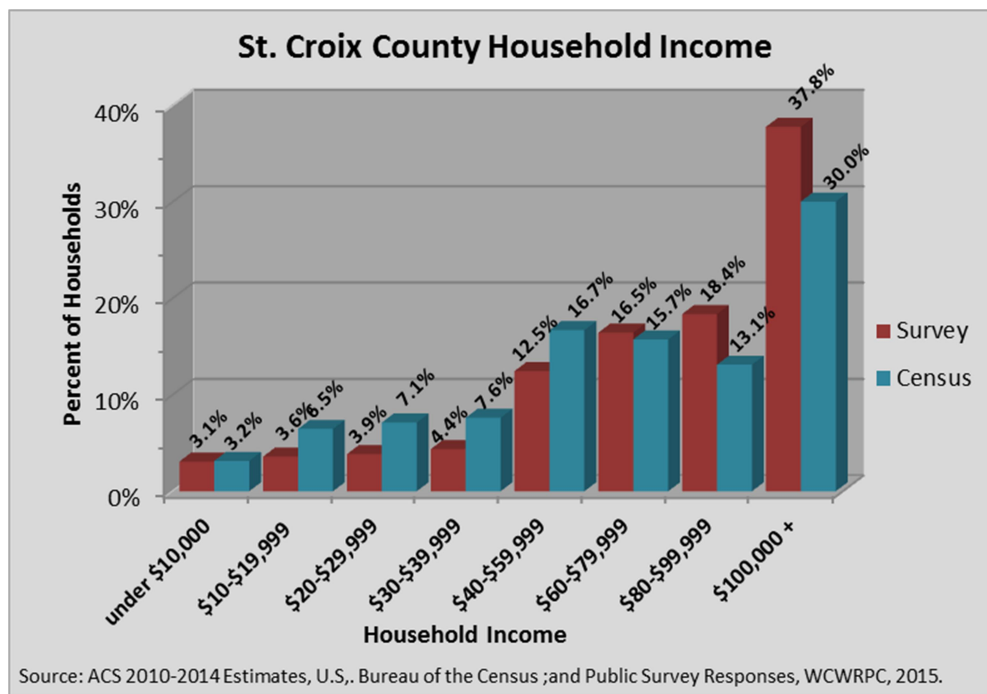
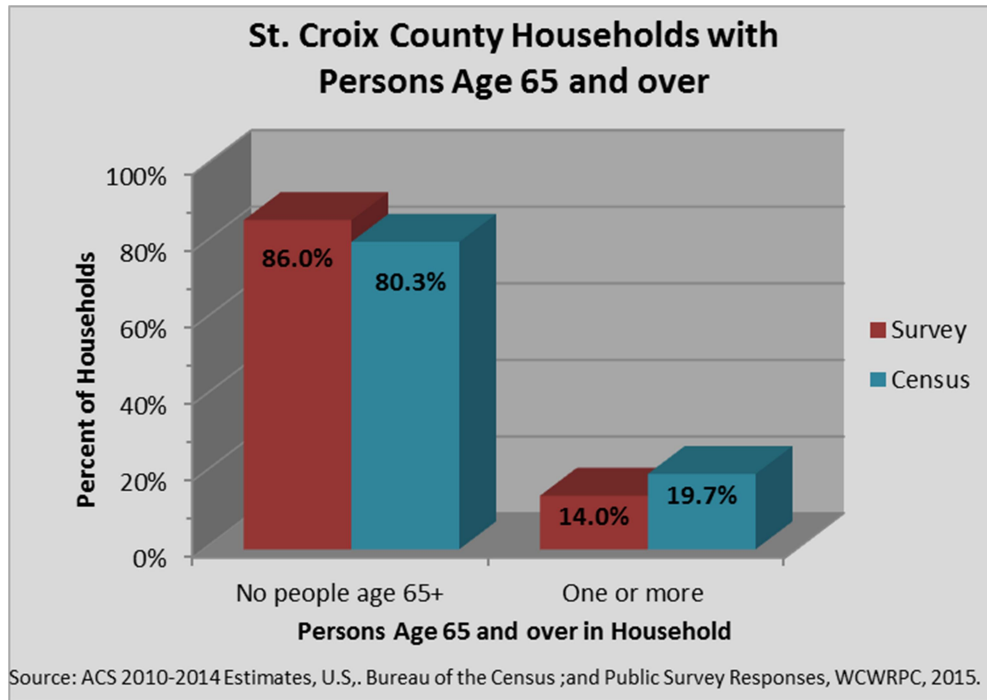
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, ACS 5-year data (2006-2010)

Appendix D
Comparison of Online Survey Results to
Census Data

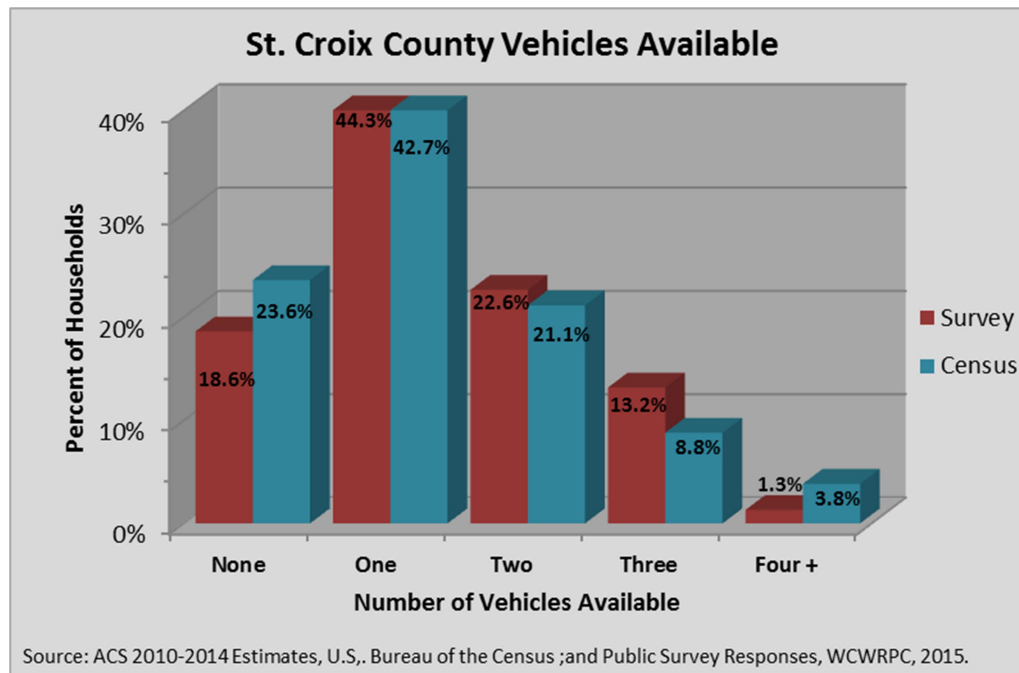
Appendix D
Comparison of Online Survey Results to Census Data



Comparison of Online Survey Results to Census Data, cont.



Comparison of Online Survey Results to Census Data, cont.



Appendix E
Public Involvement Documentation and Participation



What do you think?

The St. Croix County Transit Subcommittee is working to determine if it is feasible for transit services to meet some of the increasing travel demand between St. Croix County communities, and to communities outside of our county. Your input would be greatly appreciated!

Here's what you can do:

- #1** - Go to the County website and click on the link to take a quick 5 minute survey to let us know how you travel:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/scctransit>
- #2** - Attend a public information/input session on October 5th, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., at the Ag Center in Baldwin.
- #3** - Watch the St. Croix County website for more opportunities to stay informed and contribute to this effort.

St. Croix holds public transit open house

By [rfjnews](#) on Feb 28, 2017 at 3:15 p.m.

The St. Croix County Transit Planning Subcommittee is seeking public input on the feasibility of transit services within St. Croix County and between the county and frequented destinations in neighboring communities.

A feasibility study, being conducted by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, has considered existing travel patterns and services in and around St. Croix County and is reviewing alternatives for types of service appropriate to identified transit needs.

After considering public input, a full draft report with recommendations will be available to the public in April.

By engaging in this planning process since mid-2015, St. Croix County is laying the foundation for garnering funds and implementing a reasonable, efficient, and effective transit service that will begin serving today's needs and adjust to changing future needs.

It is the mission of the St. Croix County Transit Planning Subcommittee to establish an innovative and integrated public transit system for all citizens that strengthens and connects communities in St. Croix County and surrounding areas.

The St. Croix County Transit Subcommittee invites the public to an open house from 4-7 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, in the County Board Room in the St. Croix County Government Center, 1101 Carmichael Road, Hudson.

The public will hear from feasibility study author, Ann Schell, Senior Transportation Planner with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, review and comment on transit alternatives, ask questions, and provide other public input to the Transit Subcommittee members

For more information, contact: Dave Ostness at district10@co.saint-croix.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Dave Ostness

Chair, St. Croix County Transit Planning Subcommittee

Fax: 715-796-2339

Email: district10@co.saint-croix.wi.us

Website: www.co.saint-croix.wi.us

St. Croix County Transit Feasibility Open House

The St. Croix County Transit Planning Subcommittee is seeking public input on the feasibility of transit services within St. Croix County and between the County and frequented destinations in neighboring communities. A feasibility study, conducted by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission considered existing travel patterns and services in and around St. Croix County and reviewed alternatives for types of service appropriate to identified transit needs. After considering public input, a full draft report with recommendations will be available to the public in April.

By engaging in this planning process since mid-2015, St. Croix County is laying the foundation for garnering funds and implementing a reasonable, efficient, and effective transit service that will begin serving today's needs and adjust to changing needs in the future. It is the mission of the St. Croix County Transit Planning Subcommittee to establish an innovative and integrated public transit system for all citizens that strengthens and connects communities in St. Croix County and surrounding areas by enabling people to conveniently access services they need to pursue a fuller life.

The St. Croix County Transit Subcommittee invites the public to an Open House on Wednesday, March 8, 2017 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM, with a brief presentation at approximately 5:00 PM in the County Board Room in the St. Croix County Government Center, 1101 Carmichael Road, Hudson. The public will hear from feasibility study author, Ann Schell, Senior Transportation Planner with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, review and comment on transit alternatives, ask questions, and provide other public input to the Transit Subcommittee members at the Open House.

For more information, Contact: Dave Ostness at district10@co.saint-croix.wi.us

- END -

Buses in St. Croix County? Panel eyes possibility

By [Mike Longaecker](#) on Mar 31, 2017 at 8:27 a.m.

6

HUDSON — Residents calling for more transportation options, joined by local tax critics, spoke out last week as members of a transit panel decided how to move forward with preliminary plans that could reshape how people travel in St. Croix County.

Hudson resident Dick Pearson urged members of the St. Croix County Transit Subcommittee not to divert tax dollars toward a bus line within the county — one of several options generated in a draft plan that maps out transit possibilities.

"Do not get involved," he said, warning the subcommittee how transit costs have led to budget deficits in Minnesota. "I don't want that to happen here."

But he and others who spoke at the meeting didn't oppose private investment in transit options.

Hudson resident Ramsey Lee, one of several attendees speaking in support of the local disabled community, said private-sector options like Uber or Lyft — not currently available in St. Croix County — could make a difference.

Both companies show their services aren't offered in St. Croix County.

"Uber," Lee told panel members, "would be awesome."

The comments came Friday, March 24, where the subcommittee decided to present the plan to the St. Croix County Board Committee of the Whole. The plan, which explores that possibility of bus lines linking Hudson, River Falls and New Richmond, among other things, won't be submitted for approval — only as a status update, panel members agreed.

But members of the subcommittee indicated that they're eager to get the process moving.

Subcommittee Chairman and County Board Supervisor Dave Ostness said transportation needs are a constant topic at the county level.

"It's just time we take a look at it, and that's what we're doing," he said.

Ostness and others pored over a draft plan compiled by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, which, after months of analysis, presented various transit options for St. Croix County. The study's \$35,000 cost was funded primarily through a federal grant, with local funds covering \$7,000.

The draft plan calls for three bus lines: one from Hudson to River Falls; one from New Richmond to Hudson; and connecting River Falls and New Richmond.

According to the draft plan, the estimated annual cost for the three lines is \$540,800 — about \$219,000 of which would come from county coffers. The remaining costs would be shouldered by state and federal funds. Ten percent of the cost would come from fares, according to the study.

The plan also describes a fourth line, primarily for commuters that would travel along Interstate 94 into Minnesota. An alternative to that route, described in the draft plan, would be a commuter rail line running between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities that's under consideration. Eau Claire City Council considered approval of plans for that line Tuesday, March 28.

Other transit options in the draft plan include ride-booking taxi service, volunteer driver programs, rideshares and vanpool offerings. While some of those options exist within some St. Croix County communities, the plan describes how they could be expanded or integrated into a bus line-anchored system.

Ostness said public-private partnerships should be explored as the plan moves forward, but that demand for more transportation options isn't slowing down for senior citizens and disabled residents.

"We can't turn our backs on those folks," he said.

St Croix County Aging and Disability Resource Center community services coordinator Tracy Davis agreed. She said such a plan could bridge existing ride-booking programs in New Richmond and River Falls with other communities in the county.

BRIDGE For Community Life Executive Director Peg Gagnon also stressed the need for more transportation options, but said the key will be finding a path to financial sustainability.

"This plan won't be built overnight," she said.

Gagnon admitted that it might take more than 10 years for such plan to come to fruition. She suggested a phased plan moving ahead in small, but significant, steps.

Still, she called for the momentum to continue.

"The time has come to provide this great service for anyone who wants it," Gagnon said.

St. Croix County
Transit Feasibility Study
Wednesday, March 8, 2017
County Government Center
Hudson, WI

Comment Summary

1. Good plan. Need buses for commute to St. Paul. Please consider Route #1 first.
2. How do we get more stakeholders involved? Share costs with college/vo-tech schools, Cities, etc.
3. Add Park-n-Ride to New Richmond.
4. Please consider Route #4 first.
5. Contact Uber for this area.
6. Like all routes.
7. Obtain buses from Chicago for lower cost
8. WIFI available? Transfer bus lines without a fee? Route to Stillwater?
9. Great work!!
10. Start small.
11. Combining fixed and shared would be a good idea.
12. Would like a plan that runs buses at a wider range of times.
13. Everything you are doing is wonderful.
14. How long would you wait to catch the buses back home?
15. Where is the "local" money coming from?
16. Extend Route 1 to St. Paul. Provide service to the disabled/needy through Federal Grants.
17. Great presentation.
18. Would like to see it extend to Polk County.
19. Government should not be involved, private sector should provide this service.
20. Transportation need by a small percentage, government should not pay for and individual to "connect" or "enable".

Turnout for Transportation Testimony

Dear County Board Members, Other Representatives and Distinguished Guests,

Thank you so much for hosting this meeting tonight. As you know, St. Croix County, particularly the Hudson area, is very limited on accessible and affordable transportation. We are thankful for what we have, but currently, transportation is limited to weekends only and subsidized two hours two days a week. Furthermore, the taxi service, which St. Croix County has a contract with, is not wheelchair accessible and this prohibits some residence from having access and participating in full community lives. Several residences I know want to join the workforce but in order to do this we have to come up with an accessible and affordable transportation system. When I went to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater they had Brown Cab service, a taxi service that was approximately 5 dollars per ride and if River Falls can have ride share and New Richmond can have a ride share program can we somehow have something similar in Hudson.

I am grateful to have my friends here today and thank you to the ADRC for all the hard word that they do. We are extremely grateful for a survey that St. Croix County did assessing the feasibility of the transportation system. Thanks again for hosting this meeting, I hope in the future the disability community is notified first so that we can have even more people here. Luckily I found out about it through a listening session with Shelia Harsdorf and thank you to all who attended it and thank you to the Transportation Sub-committee for all of their hard work. The community stands behind you 100% and God Bless what you do. And the disability community would love to be further involved in the process, let us know what we can do to help. I look forward to getting involved in promoting accessible transportation, not only throughout the St. Croix County area, but statewide for all citizens. Insuring affordable access to accessible transportation is a crucial element for the long-term success of citizens with disabilities and the general public.

People of all abilities need to be able to participate in all aspects of community life. In order to accomplish this, transportation must be accessible and affordable to everyone so that people of all abilities can continue to participate in employment and other activities. As the population continues to grow, there is always going to be a need for accessible, affordable transportation. Many individuals of all abilities have to increasingly rely on family members and friends to take off work and get to places they need to be. This puts a hardship on caregivers.

With an accessible, affordable transportation program, citizens could be more independent by calling for their own rides to and from work and be contributors to society. As of right now, the senior citizens have a transportation program that operates one or two days a week. I'm hoping that with St. Croix County's community transportation program, some partnerships can be made to develop transportation options people can get to appointments, movies, or simply go to work.

We are very, very grateful for the services we have; however, in the City of Hudson, the taxi service for accessible, affordable transportation is only available limited hours, making it hard for people to get to their jobs. In my opinion, people with disabilities must be able to participate in all aspects of civic life. In order to make this happen, we must insure that individuals have the same access to transportation as the general public. This will allow persons with disabilities to become contributors to society and pursue their employment goals and aspects of civic life and other essential parts of the American dream.

Please note I am speaking as a citizen, not as a part of any organization.

Your consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 715 410 0974.

Sincerely,
Ramsey Lee
1100 St. Croix Heights
Hudson, WI 54016

March 12, 2017

Dear Mr. Ostness Vice Chair County Board of Supervisors,
(Email: district10@co.saint-croix.wi.us)

I attended the hearing last week "Transit Feasibility Open House" at the government center. I did not realize this began almost 2 years ago. As to be expected, the vast majority of attendees appeared to support "the transit system for ALL [my emphasis] citizens." This "*all inclusive*" proposal is one of my complaints with this plan.

I do not see the wisdom in using **our taxes** to pay for something to benefit everyone, many (or most) who do not need it and/or will not use it. I noticed in the survey on the power point, I don't believe you asked the question, "Do you need public transportation?" I drove to Minneapolis and St. Paul for 30 years for work. As "nice" as it would have been to have someone else drive me to work, it was quite unthinkable. Many times I left early for work or stayed late. Any public or shared transportation would have been unworkable. Furthermore, I have been driving my 92-year old mother (living in Woodbury) to various appointments for about the last 10 years because she is not driving. It is not convenient, but this is my challenge, not my neighbors'.

Although I do believe some sort of transportation system is needed by a small percentage of the community, I don't believe it is up to our government, using our taxes, to "**connect** citizens affordably to quality rural and urban life" or to **enable** [my emphasis] "people to conveniently access services they need to pursue a fuller life." Many families, as is my own, live paycheck to paycheck, are worrying how to take care of immediate and extended family members without having our taxes raised (again) to help people out who can manage on their own.

I agree some changes need to be made for a small segment of the population. But tax-subsidized transportation should be on an as-needed basis not an *as-wanted basis*. Just because some is disabled or a student or elderly or young DOES NOT mean they require a discounted fair. This only adds to the tax burden.

I find it exasperating that you use words like "grants" and "funding" and "matching" when it all comes down to the same thing. TAXES. Our taxes went up \$500 from last year. I am retired, my husband should be. When does the government stop finding more projects for my money? I will not benefit from this, but I will pay for it. My husband needs his vehicle for work, I need mine for many reasons, including care of my mother and my grandson. Furthermore, I don't believe it is my responsibility for my taxes to be used so someone can "visit a friend."

This project needs to be much more visible than it has been. I'm guessing you are going to keep your cost projections low to present to the public as they are sure to go up. Do you have any models from other states where this type of transportation pays for itself? Your previous survey, from what I remember, had a very small number of respondents. This should go to every household in every county and to every business that you are hoping to receive money from.

Also, if I understand this correctly, this will eventually be submitted to the St. Croix County Board for a decision? Something of this magnitude should be presented to the voters since they are the ones footing the bill.

Thank you.

Pat Sabin, Hudson, WI

9/29/16

Dear Board Members and Transportation Committee Members,

My name is Ramsey Lee, and on the county board website, I saw the transportation survey. It is my goal to make sure citizens of all abilities can participate in all aspects of community life. There are some individuals that do not have access to a vehicle and on the survey, it says "How many working motorized vehicles (cars, SUVs, trucks) are available to members of your household?" A lot of people on low income do not have access to vehicles. That is why we need an accessible, affordable, transportation system for everybody in the county. There is a tremendous need for accessible, affordable transportation in this county because people need to go to work, church, ect. But the survey will not let you choose "zero" for number of vehicles available to your household. So therefore, findings could be misleading. There is a lot of people in this community do not drive. For me it is due to physical limitations, but it could be a variety of reasons.

For whatever reason, the county cut the affordable 3\$ cab fair on the weekends to one day out of the weekends. This causes hardship because the cab is not accessible. It is my dream to one day make it accessible for all citizens. Secondly, I would like to become more involved in the accessible transportation committee so that I could be more involved in the process. I know several other citizens that would like to become involved as well.

I was wondering if a taxi could buy an accessible van so that they can offer it to the community. I saw one advertised in the paper, it is a 2008 Chrysler town and country limited, handicap accessible van with 100k miles for 17,950 in New Richmond. Perhaps we could write a grant for the community foundation for the city to buy that van.

I am grateful for the transportation options we have, but cutting transportation when we are already limited is not acceptable. I was wondering if the transportation committee could do a presentation for the community members at tribute commons and if I can be involved in the transportation committee or sub-committee that meets on the fourth Friday of the month.

Thanks again for all you do, and I look forward to being involved in the transportation committee.

I was wondering if the survey monkey could be modified to account for those who do not drive, or do not have transportation.

Thanks,

Ramsey Lee